

U.S. special forces going to Somalia

WASHINGTON (R) — A task force of nearly 400 special U.S. forces will be sent to Somalia in the next week to help quell mounting a violence around Mogadishu but Pentagon officials denied their mission was to seize Somali warlord Mohamed Farah Aidid. U.S. defence officials said Tuesday that the special troops will be available for any operation ordered by the U.N. command in Mogadishu. "Getting Aidid is a U.N. objective but that is not the reason they are being sent," one defence official said. A Mogadishu airport Monday night caused minor damage to four Italian military helicopters. The helicopters were parked at the airport when at least four mortar shells exploded, U.N. spokesman Captain Tim McDavitt confirmed. The U.N. Saturday closed the airport to civilian flights, saying it had information that militiamen loyal to general Aidid possessed anti-aircraft weapons and were ready to use them against the U.N. forces.

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8 ambassadors called home

AMMAN (J.T.) — Eight Jordanian ambassadors abroad will be transferred to the Foreign Ministry as of Oct. 1, according to informed sources. The sources said the ambassadors involved are Khalid Madadhab (Bonn), Samir Khalifah (Athens), Nabil Al Talhuni (Vienna), Shaher Bak (Madrid), Nayef Al Haddid (Damascus), Nayef Al Qadi (Doha), Naser Al Bataineh (Riyadh) and Ahmad Al Adailah (Sanaa). The sources added that those ambassadors had completed their terms and that new appointments will be announced soon.

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Ottom named Petra chief; Mahadin moved to Prime Ministry

AMMAN (J.T.) — Abdullah Al Ottom, a long-time Petra reporter and serving deputy chief, was named Tuesday as director of the Jordan News Agency, Petra, to replace Khalid Mahadin, who was named advisor at the Prime Ministry, informed sources told the Jordan Times Tuesday. Also Tuesday, Mohammad Amin, an advisor to the information minister and a former director of Jordan Television, was named director of the Press and Publications Department to replace Issa Al Jahmani, the sources said.

4 Palestinians, soldier wounded

GAZA CITY (AFP) — Fighting in the occupied Gaza Strip wounded four Palestinians and one Israeli soldier Tuesday, Palestinian sources said. Israeli soldiers opened fire on Palestinians throwing stones at them in the Shati camp, injuring four of them, the sources said. Unidentified men raked an Israeli army patrol with gunfire near the Rafah cemetery, wounding the soldier. The sources said the area was closed off by the army afterwards.

Yinhe in Gulf

ABU DHABI (AFP) — A Chinese freighter suspected by Washington of carrying chemical weapons components for Iran entered the Gulf Tuesday after Beijing agreed to an inspection by Saudi officials. The 21,000-tonne Yinhe sailed through the strategic Strait of Hormuz and into the Gulf after spending almost three weeks on the high seas in the Gulf of Oman shadowed by the U.S. Navy. China said it had agreed to let Saudi Arabia inspect the vessel and was sending a team to the Saudi port of Dammam on the Gulf coast.

Kuwaiti emir visits Lebanon

BEIRUT (AFP) — The emir of Kuwait Tuesday met President Elias Hrawi and became the first Arab head of state to visit Lebanon for almost two decades. Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah left the country after a four-hour visit held under tight security. It was the first visit to Lebanon by an Arab head of state since before the Lebanese war of 1975-1990. The Kuwaiti ruler arrived in Lebanon by car. Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri met him at the Syrian border and Lebanese army troops were deployed 70 kilometres along the road to the presidential palace at Saabda, outside Beirut.

Babangida plans to quit tomorrow

ABUJA (AFP) — Nigerian military leader Ibrahim Babangida will formally give up the presidency Thursday and hand over power to an interim government, his spokesman said here Tuesday. Spokesman Duro Olanibute told AFP: "A farewell parade will be held for him on Thursday at 10:00 a.m. (0900 GMT) on the parade ground" here in the federal capital. He said members of the interim government would be sworn in on Thursday "immediately after the farewell parade in honour of Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida."

Militants kill Copt accused of blast

CAIRO (AFP) — Muslim militants have shot dead a mentally ill Coptic Christian they accused of a bomb attack in Cairo that killed seven people, police said Tuesday. Gunmen shot dead Khaled Yehia Theophiles, a 20-year-old agronomy student, in a busy street in Anabou near Asyut in southern Egypt Monday evening. Police blamed the outlawed Al Gamaa Al Islamiyah, which had accused Theophiles of carrying out a car-bomb attack in central Cairo on May 21 that killed seven people and wounded 20. The bombing was never claimed, but police suspected Muslim militants. Theophiles was arrested at the scene along with other suspects and said he had carried out the attack when they realized he was mentally ill and in Cairo for treatment.

King, Arafat assess peace process and coordination

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter with agency dispatches

AMMAN — His Majesty King Hussein met with Yasser Arafat Tuesday against a background of open dissent within the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) over the 21-month-old Middle East peace process and PLO finances.

The King's talks with Mr. Arafat also came against the backdrop of differences over proposals for a partial Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories.

The King said in an interview with AFP Monday that Mr. Arafat had not consulted Jordan on the idea of Palestinians gaining control of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank city of Jericho as a first step towards self-rule in the territories.

The King met the PLO chairman at the royal palace before leaving on a visit to Oman. Mr. Arafat Saturday called on Israel to withdraw from Gaza and Jericho at the start of an interim period of Palestinian self-rule.

PLO spokesman Yasser Abed Rabbo, accompanying Mr. Arafat, said here Tuesday that Israel might soon agree to such a withdrawal.

But the King told AFP he had not examined the possibility of a partial Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank.

"We are awaiting an opportunity to look at this question and that of general coordination with the Palestinians as soon as possible in order to avoid any negative repercussions," he said.

King Hussein commented it was "strange that while Arab states are discussing the status of their occupied territories the Palestinians are negotiating an interim step towards a final solution."

"The question I ask myself is, what is it an interim step towards?"

The King, who flew to Oman later Tuesday, met with Mr. Arafat for a short period, unlike previous encounters over the past year which lasted for several hours, officials said.

Jordanian officials sought to play down the differences between the King and Mr. Arafat. "It was a routine visit and the talks centred on the process of negotiations with Israel," one official commented.

The Jordan News Agency, Petra, said the two leaders discussed Jordanian-Palestinian coordination and means of forging closer inter-Arab cooperation in preparation of the 11th round of peace talks.

The meeting was attended by Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali, Royal Court Chief Khaled Karaki, Palestinian Ambassador to Jordan Al Tayeb Abdul Rahim and member of the PLO Executive Committee Abed Rabbo and PLO official Bashir Al Barghouti.

The King and Mr. Arafat also held a closed session, during which they "consulted on the means and conditions necessary to make the peace process achieve its objectives," Petra said.

Later Tuesday, Mr. Arafat and Prime Minister Majali chaired a meeting of the Joint Higher Jordanian-Palestinian Committee during which they discussed the outcome of meeting of the joint Jordanian-Palestinian committees held over the past two days (see story below) and reviewed the present and future perceptions of Jordanian-Palestinian relations, Petra said.

"The two sides stressed the need to crystallise a unified Arab position in the 11th round of peace talks," which will start in Washington next Tuesday, Petra said.

The Jordanian side to the talks included Information Minister Ma'n Abu Nowar, Minister of State for Prime Ministry Affairs Jawad Al Anani and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Talal Al Hassan.

The Palestinian side included PLO executives Abed Rabbo, Yasser Arafat and Suleiman Al Najjab and Mohammad Zuhdi Al Nashshibi, head of the Palestinian economic affairs department, in addition to Ambassador Abdul Rahim.

Mr. Abed Rabbo said meanwhile Israel could soon pull out of the Gaza Strip and Jericho as a first step towards Palestinian self-rule in the occupied territories.

"There is a possibility, in the near future, that Israel will agree to withdraw from the Gaza Strip and the Jericho region, as a first step," Mr. Abed Rabbo said.

"This would be a historic achievement" for the Palestinians, he told AFP, however, that

Israel had not yet made any such commitment.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said Tuesday Palestinian delegation would broach the idea of gaining autonomy in Gaza and Jericho first.

"We are ready to discuss all kinds of proposals that will advance the transfer from the present situation to a situation in which the Palestinian residents will take over running their own lives," Mr. Rabin said.

He said that Israel would not object to accelerating the transfer process and withdrawing Israeli forces from the Gaza Strip.

For a final peace agreement, the Palestinians would need initial financial aid of at least \$2 billion dollars from Europe, the United States, Japan and Arab states, he said.

A local report said Tuesday Jordan has told Palestinians it expects a measure of sovereignty over East Jerusalem if Israel returns it to Arabs hands under a peace accord.

The Arabic-language daily Sawt Al Shaab said a draft paper was submitted to a Jordanian Palestinian committee on Arab Jerusalem set up by King Hussein and Mr. Arafat last month.

It emphasises Amman's historic role over Jerusalem. "Hence, the Jordanian role, and within this concept of understanding, has a prime duty especially in filling the sovereignty gap, a point that will be raised from time to time," it quoted the document as saying.

The document could not be immediately authenticated. The committee will discuss geographic, religious, demographic and political matters related to the city, the newspaper said.

The Jerusalem Committee will discuss all these issues, considering that the Palestinians partly have the right to demand the geographic dimension while at the same time the city's religious and historic dimension represents a main interest for Jordan because it historically inherited this," it quoted the document as saying.

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His Majesty King Hussein Tuesday meets Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat (Petra photo)

King, Qaboos review means to restore Arab solidarity

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

MUSCAT — His Majesty King Hussein and Sultan Qaboos Ben Sa'id of Oman Tuesday discussed Arab and regional issues as well as means to restore Arab solidarity, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said.

The agency said Sultan Qaboos and the King, who arrived here Tuesday evening, expressed "pride in the brotherly relations (between Jordan and Oman)."

The agency did not elaborate, but the King's visit to Muscat was widely seen as another step towards healing the Arab rift caused by the Gulf crisis sparked by the August 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

The King will review with Sultan Qaboos inter-Arab relations and prospects for Arab solidarity and reconciliation, said a Jordanian official, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Oman and Jordan have traditionally had close ties. The strain caused in Jordan's relations with the Gulf states led by Saudi Ara-

bia in the wake of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait did not extend to Amman's relations with Muscat.

The sultanate has been trying to mediate the rift without success.

King Hussein is a close friend of Sultan Qaboos. The two men, both graduates of Britain's Sandhurst Military Academy, often visit each other and exchange telephone calls. The monarch visited Oman last on Jan. 16.

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan visited Qatar two weeks ago.

The rift in Jordan's relations with Gulf states was caused by its refusal to join the U.S.-led coalition against Iraq.

On Sunday, Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali told reporters he saw encouraging signs in efforts to mend fences with the Gulf states.

"Our hands are stretched wide open to them and things are promising with some of our brothers in the Gulf," Dr. Majali said. "We hope this will also be the case with others."

The King is accompanied on the visit by His Royal Highness Prince Talal Ben Mohammad, the military secretary of the King. Chief of Royal Protocol Mohammad Al Adwan and the Jordanian ambassador to Oman.

They attended the King's talks with Sultan Qaboos. On the Omani side, the meeting was attended by the deputy prime minister and minister for financial and economic affairs, the minister of court, the minister of the Sultan's office affairs, and the minister of state for foreign affairs.

King Hussein was received upon arrival at Salalah airport by Sultan Qaboos, the deputy prime minister and minister for financial and economic affairs and senior Omani officials.

Upon departure from Amman, the King was seen off by His Royal Highness Prince Mohammad, the personal representative of the King, and Their Royal Highnesses Prince Faisal and Prince Ali, Prime Minister Ma-

(Continued on page 10)

180 exiles to return Sept. 10

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — The Israeli army will bring back 180 Palestinian expellees around Sept. 10, but most will be jailed while investigations are carried out into each case, the military police chief said Tuesday.

"It is very probable that all those who return will be arrested for inquiries and their period of detention will be determined by the law," Colonel Moti Biran told Israeli radio.

Col. Biran said after initial arrest the men, who were expelled on Dec. 17 as Islamic fundamentalists, would either be freed, held for further inquiries or charged and sentenced.

Expellees spokesman Abdul Aziz Rantisi announced Tuesday that Israel had agreed to repatriate on Sept. 8 and 9 more than 200 of the exiles stranded in southern Lebanon.

He said from the exile's camp at Marj Al Zuhour that 205 of the 396 exiles would be allowed home. He predicted that the remainder would be repatriated before Dec. 17.

In Tel Aviv, Israel defence ministry spokesman Oded Ben Ami refused to confirm or deny if a date had been set. "We are not giving an exact date. We are working on the whole problem. Only once we have all the information will be announce it," he told AFP.

Israel expelled 415 Palestinians from the occupied territories last year after the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas claimed responsibility for killing several Israelis. Lebanon refused to take care of them and they were stranded in South Lebanon.

Nineteen who were sick or expelled by mistake have been brought back.

The remaining 396, who demanded that Israel let them all return together, finally voted on Aug. 15 to accept an Israeli timetable for a staggered return.

Rabin outlines view of Lebanon peace

DEIR AL BALAH, occupied Gaza Strip (Agencies) — Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin Tuesday outlined for the first time how a peace agreement could be reached with Lebanon in a period of months, but warned that Syria might block it.

Speaking just days before the next round of the talks is scheduled to convene in Washington, Mr. Rabin said the agreement would come in several stages including deploying the Lebanese army closer to the Israeli border and dismantling the militia Hizbollah.

Assessing that Israel had no territorial claims in Lebanon, Mr. Rabin suggested that the final stage would be an Israeli troop withdrawal from the country.

"We would very much welcome if the Lebanese government were to deploy its army further south within Lebanon and demonstrate to us that it is capable of controlling what is happening in its territory," Mr. Rabin told a press conference at the opening

of a water desalination plant here.

The opening was postponed after nine Israeli soldiers died last week in an ambush claimed by Hizbollah in the southern strip of Lebanon that Israel occupies. It has occupied the zone since 1985 in an attempt to stop attacks on its northern settlements.

Mr. Rabin said if the Lebanese army were deployed just north of that zone and could disarm Hizbollah, it would take about six to nine months to develop the confidence needed for a peace treaty.

The Lebanese government has been reluctant to move against Hizbollah, citing general support for its attacks against Israeli troops on Lebanese soil. Its newly reconstituted army is not clearly strong enough to defang the militia. Finally, United Nations peacekeeping troops fear that putting the Israeli and Lebanese army close together might stir clashes.

Mr. Rabin blamed Syria for the

continuing tension in southern Lebanon by blocking the government from deploying about 3,000 troops farther south.

"Under the pressure of Syria they could not deploy the number of Lebanese forces they wanted to," he said.

Israel meanwhile sent more big guns into its "security zone" in South Lebanon after guerrillas made their second attack in five days.

Security sources said five artillery guns were towed over the border to the southern town of Marjayoun, headquarters of the Israeli-backed South Lebanon Army (SLA) militia.

Six self-propelled artillery pieces entered the zone on Sunday, the first reinforcements since Hizbollah blew up and killed nine Israeli soldiers in the south last Thursday.

The Israeli death toll was the heaviest for one day in Lebanon since 1985 and Israel has vowed to avenge the killings.

Two Iraqi ex-ambassadors defect

LONDON (Agencies) — Two Iraqi ambassadors, one a former justice minister, defected to join the opposition Tuesday, condemning what they called the Iraqi regime.

Hisham Al Shawi, a former justice minister and until now ambassador to Canada, and Hamed Al Jubouri, ambassador to Tunisia until he retired last week, announced their decision at a news conference in London.

British officials said the two diplomats had been given permission to stay in Britain.

Mr. Shawi, 62, who is also a former ambassador to Britain, said: "I publicly declare my opposition to the regime in Baghdad."

He said the government "admits no mistake and feels no responsibility. It takes no advice... it is persistent in its perversity and deep-rooted in its arrogance."

The Foreign Office confirmed the two men have been granted visitor visas. A spokesman, speaking anonymously in keeping with British custom, said "it's up to them" to decide whether to apply for political asylum.

Mr. Shawi was turned away by the Canadian government earlier this summer.

Mr. Shawi thought he had a deal to settle in Canada just as

ex-diplomat Mohammad Al Mashat did in 1991, dissident Jawad Hashim said Tuesday.

Mr. Hashim, a former Iraqi cabinet minister who masterminded Mr. Mashat's fast-track immigration to Canada, said that a carefully planned entry to Canada for Mr. Shawi fell apart when Canadian officials got nervous.

An Iraqi diplomat said in Amman the two defectors had retired last month.

"They had reached the official retirement age of 63, and therefore the Iraqi government terminated their services in July," the diplomat told news agencies.

"They have been relieved of their duties and no longer represent the Iraqi government," he said.

British radio said one of the men is believed to have sensitive information about Iraq's efforts to rearm following the Gulf war. But a spokesman for the International Institute for Strategic Studies doubted they possessed high-grade technical intelligence.

Turkey wants U.N. to review Iraq embargo

ANKARA (R) — Turkey wants the U.N. Security Council to review trade sanctions against Iraq, saying they have proved ineffective and have damaged Turkish interests.

Volkan Vural, foreign policy adviser to Prime Minister Tansu Ciller, said Tuesday that persuading the Western allies to rethink the embargo was one of Turkey's main priorities.

"It has not achieved its objective," he told Reuters. "It has hurt the Iraqi people, but not brought about change."

Turkey, he said, had lost up to \$3 billion a year in trade, services and revenue from the oil pipeline it shares with Iraq in the three years since the United Nations imposed sanctions on Baghdad for invading Kuwait in August 1990.

Mr. Vural said Ankara did not plan to step out of line with the world community on Iraq or "reward Iraq for its aggression against Kuwait," but wanted its legitimate interests considered.

"We will remain committed to the fulfillment of the embargo as long as it is sustained by the United Nations," he said. "We want the Security Council to look at it from a new perspective, taking into account the losses suffered by Turkey."

Turkey firmly backed the U.S.-led coalition in the Gulf war against Iraq in 1991, letting allied bombers use Turkish bases.

It has since let U.S., French and British planes use the same bases to patrol northern Iraq to deter any Iraqi government attacks on Iraqi Kurds.

Ms. Ciller, who has been presenting Turkey's viewpoint on the sanctions to a succession of visiting U.S. congressmen, is expected to visit Washington for talks with President Bill Clinton in late September or early October.

"She will probably raise the issue then," Mr. Vural said.

Ankara's most urgent concern is to empty, cleanse and refill the 1.6 million-barrel-per-day pipeline from the Kirkuk oil fields in Iraq to a terminal on the Turkish Mediterranean coast.

Oil sources said the 980 kilometres pipeline contains 7.2 million barrels of crude and twice that amount would have to be

pumped from Iraq to complete the maintenance operation.

They said pumping stations in northern Iraq would need repairs costing about \$18 million before this could be done.

Saudi Arabia has already drained Iraqi crude from the export pipelines across its territory, the sources said.

Asked if Turkey might accept an oil-for-debt arrangement similar to the one under which the United Nations allows Jordan to import Iraqi crude for domestic use without any cash changing hands, Mr. Vural said: "This is one option."

Iraq owes Turkey about \$2 billion, he added.

Mr. Vural said the sanctions had blocked trade with a neighbour which was once of a major trading partner and further depressed the economy of the rebellious, mainly Kurdish southeast.

Despite its financial difficulties, Turkey, saddled with debt and still paying the cost of constructing the now-idle pipeline, was trying to help the emerging countries of Central Asia, the Balkans and the Caucasus, he said.

Mr. Vural reiterated Turkey's concern that Iraq's territorial integrity be preserved for the sake of regional stability.

"We believe that a tamed Iraq, respecting international laws, would be an asset to regional balance and stability," he said.

"Of course it is the Iraqis' responsibility to act in accordance with international law."

The United Nations has previously offered to let Iraq export oil worth \$1.6 billion through Turkey to pay for imports of food and medicine, relief work and war reparations. Iraq has rejected the offer, saying the conditions violate its sovereignty.

U.N. due in Baghdad

Three U.N. missile experts will head for Baghdad Wednesday to monitor missile tests at two sites near Baghdad, a U.N. official said Tuesday.

Team leader Guy Martelle said they would stay in Iraq as long as they are needed by the U.N. special commission responsible for scrapping Iraq's weapons of mass destruction.



JOINT COMMITTEE: Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat after a meeting Tuesday of the joint Jordanian-Palestinian Higher Committee (Photo by Aynsley Floyd)

Court rejects new Demjanjuk bid

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israel's supreme court Tuesday rejected an appeal from Holocaust memorial group that demanded police investigate whether John Demjanjuk committed war crimes at two Nazi concentration camps.

The ruling, however, had no bearing on an earlier court decision to keep Mr. Demjanjuk in jail until Sept. 2 when Chief Justice Meir Shamgar scheduled a hearing on Holocaust survivors' demands for a new war crimes trial.

It also came a day after Nazi hunters said one Holocaust survivor had claimed he remembered Mr. Demjanjuk as a guard in the Sobibor camp in Nazi-occupied Poland.

The woman, Esther Raab of Vineland, New Jersey, could prove critical to efforts to persuade Israel's supreme court to put Mr. Demjanjuk on trial a second time.

The Los Angeles-based Simon Wiesenthal Centre, a Nazi hunting group, hoped to take a deposition from her by Wednesday, according to Efraim Zuroff, director of the Wiesenthal Centre's Israel office.

Ed. Nishnic, Mr. Demjanjuk's

son-in-law and family spokesman, said in Ohio Monday that Mrs. Raab had failed on several occasions to pick Mr. Demjanjuk's picture from a photo lineup.

"These alleged Nazi hunters are so determined to build up another false case against Mr. Demjanjuk that they have no feeling whatsoever for dragging survivors through public torment," Mr. Nishnic said.

Mr. Demjanjuk, 73, was acquitted July 29 of being "Ivan the Terrible," a guard at Treblinka camp who operated gas chambers.

But his deportation has been delayed four times following appeals to have him tried for allegations he was a guard at Sobibor and other camps.

Tuesday's appeal was by the Lapid Movement, a privately funded Holocaust memorial group. It asked justices to order police to look for survivor witnesses to support documents suggesting Mr. Demjanjuk served at the Regensburg and Flossenburg concentration camps. They proposed ads be placed in newspapers asking survivors to come forward.

The three-member court panel rejected the appeal, agreeing with attorney general Yosef Har-

ish's view that there was "no room for another police investigation," Justice Ministry spokeswoman Orli Shemesh said.

Mr. Shemesh also quoted Justice Gabriel Bach, who headed the panel, as ruling there was no reason to alter his Aug. 18 ruling, rejecting survivors' appeals to retry Mr. Demjanjuk.

Other appellants, including Holocaust survivors, last week won a reprieve until Sept. 2 to petition for a larger panel of justices to review their case.

"We certainly are not happy but will honour the decision," Lapid spokesman Arieh Barnea said after Tuesday's court ruling.

Mr. Barnea said he thought Israel stood a better chance of convicting Mr. Demjanjuk for being a guard at Flossenburg and Regensburg because there would be no question of double jeopardy. Sobibor was part of the prosecution's case against Mr. Demjanjuk at the first trial.

The Ukrainian-born Demjanjuk has denied being at these camps, and says he was incarcerated in a German camp after being captured as a Soviet Red Army soldier.

Peres denies secret PLO talks in Stockholm

COPENHAGEN (AFP) — Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres on Tuesday denied reports that he had met with a senior Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) official in Stockholm last week.

"No, I have not met with representatives of the PLO in Stockholm. I met only with Swedes," he told journalists after talks with his Danish counterpart Neils Helveg Petersen.

The Israeli daily paper Yediot Aharonot on Tuesday reported that Mr. Peres had held a secret meeting in the Swedish capital last week with a senior PLO official and that Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin had approved the talks.

Discussions had centred on the PLO calls for Israel to withdraw from the Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Jericho first and to grant the Palestinians full control before an overall agreement is reached on limited autonomy, the paper said.

In Stockholm, Swedish foreign ministry spokesman Claes Jönasson said: "There was nothing in the programme that we arranged. We're not aware of anything of that kind."

Mr. Rabin admitted Aug. 11 that he allowed his ministers to meet PLO officials but described such initiatives as "negative."

The prime minister insisted such talks were not held in the name of his government.

Environment Minister Yossi Sarid saw a top PLO figure in Cairo recently and Shulamit Aloni met a senior PLO figure in Paris earlier this year when she was education minister. Both are members of the left-wing Meretz party.

A flurry of press reports in recent weeks have claimed Israel is conducting secret negotiations with the PLO to try to overcome the impasse at the Middle East peace negotiations.

The Israeli parliament lifted a ban on contacts with the PLO in January but at the Middle East peace talks Israel negotiates only with Palestinians from the occupied territories, who nonetheless take orders from the PLO based in Tunis.

During his one-day visit to Denmark, Mr. Peres held talks with Mr. Petersen on the Middle East peace process and economic cooperation.

"We want, from the Danish government's side, to come to a new trade agreement soon between the European Community and Israel," Mr. Petersen said.

"And when there is a clear outlook for peace, then Denmark will be ready for economic cooperation in the region," he added.

Mr. Peres was optimistic about the possibility of peace in the Middle East.

"We more or less have an agreement with Jordan. We do not have agreements with Lebanon, Syria or the Palestinians, but we want to negotiate seriously when talks start again" on Aug. 31, Mr. Peres said.

He admitted the Palestinian negotiators were in reality led by the PLO but indicated that was unimportant.

"We will concentrate on the contents of the discussions, but we are not blind when it comes to who we are talking to," he said.

Mr. Peres left Denmark for Israel early Tuesday after concluding a one-week tour of the Nordic countries.

On Monday in Helsinki, Mr. Peres said he had asked economic assistance from Finland as well as from other Nordic countries to ease the life of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Istanbul paper staff start hunger strike

ANKARA (R) — The staff of a pro-Kurdish Istanbul newspaper said they were on an indefinite hunger strike to protest against what they said were government attacks on the freedom of expression. "The authorities in Turkey deny the people what is considered elsewhere a fundamental right — the right of free expression," the staff of Ozgur Gundem said in a statement. They said Ozgur Gundem journalists had been kidnapped, arrested and murdered. "Our offices are raided almost every day and we are subjected to constant surveillance," they said. Aysel Malkac, a 22-year-old Ozgur Gundem reporter, disappeared from outside the newspaper's Istanbul office 17 days ago. The statement said plainclothes police had detained her but the authorities had not acknowledged this. The daily's correspondent in the eastern province of Bitlis, Ferhat Tepe, was kidnapped and murdered earlier this month. The statement listed five other Ozgur Gundem journalists who had been detained, including Nezahat Ozgen, a reporter in Mardin province, who it said was eight months pregnant. The staff said they were starting their hunger strike outside the Human Rights Association headquarters in Istanbul.

8 million Iranians live by carpet industry

NICOSIA (R) — Eight million of Iran's 60 million people earn their living by producing and selling Persian carpets, according to the Tehran Times. About two million are weavers, it said. The figures, carried by the official Iranian news agency IRNA, were given in a comment on a carpet exhibition which opened in Tehran on Monday. The daily called for the creation of a central authority to develop the industry and improve working conditions for rural weavers, IRNA said.

Russian police clash with Somali refugees

MOSCOW (R) — Russian police used force to evict Somali refugees from the compound of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Moscow on Monday evening, witnesses said. The police used batons against several dozen refugees who had broken into the compound to protest at what they regard as the neglect of their needs by the UNHCR. A doctor at the scene said two men and a woman had been taken to hospital with minor injuries. "We have been here for three weeks without proper food, we want to show the world what is happening to us," one demonstrator said after the brief clash. A group of about 300 people from Somalia have been camped for the last three weeks in makeshift tent and huts outside the fence of the UNHCR building. Their demands for political asylum have not been accepted. "They behaved improperly so force had to be used to remove them," a city official said by telephone.

Israeli official resigns to avoid sanctions

TEL AVIV (AFP) — A right-wing Israeli justice ministry official resigned Monday to avoid punitive measures for insulting a left-wing deputy, and deprived Jewish settlers in the occupied territories of an important ally. Felia Albeck, 55, the state prosecutor's top civil department official, was noted for her ultra-nationalist positions and last month lashed out at Haim Oran, a member of parliament from the left-wing Meretz party, by questioning his loyalty to Israel. She said "the state was not dear to his heart" when he proposed draft legislation suggesting Israel pay the same compensation to Palestinian victims of Jewish terrorism as Israeli victims of Arab terrorism. Faced with unspecified punitive measures by Justice Minister David Libai, Ms. Albeck chose to resign. Ms. Albeck specialised in finding the legal means to purchase land in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Iran proposes caviar cartel

NICOSIA (R) — Iran has proposed the formation of a caviar cartel to four former Soviet republics with which it shares the Caspian Sea, an Iranian newspaper said Monday. "It is very regrettable that Caspian caviar, the most precious and rare delicacy in the world, is being sold at a low price in world markets," Salam newspaper quoted Construction Jihad Minister Gholamreza Forouzesh as telling a meeting of the five countries at Iran's Caspian port of Bandar Anzali. His deputy Rasul Lahijanjan, who heads Iran's state fisheries, suggested at the meeting that Iran, Russia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan set up a committee to regulate all caviar exports to world markets, the paper said. Troubles of the caviar industry have increased since the breakup of the Soviet Union two years ago increased the number of countries involved in it from two — Iran and the Soviet Union — to five. Mr. Forouzesh said the Caspian held 90 per cent of the world's sturgeon, whose slightly salted raw eggs form the prized delicacy. "Caspian sturgeon stocks have been severely hurt in recent years for various reasons, including industrial and agricultural pollution and unregulated fishing," Mr. Forouzesh said. Mr. Lahijanjan said Iran planned to build a big fish farm to help replenish sturgeon stocks in the Caspian Sea.

31 die in Kurdish region heat

ZAKHO (AFP) — Heat exhaustion has killed 31 people in Kurdish-controlled Dohuk province in northern Iraq, which has been deprived of electricity for three weeks, according to a U.N. report. The deaths occurred in hospitals in the province, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) said, adding that typhoid, cholera and hepatitis epidemics were expected to break out in the region within the next two to three weeks. Dohuk's Kurdish authorities have declined to give a reason for the electricity cut, but according to Kurdish sources, supplies have been cut off by Iraqi authorities in Mosul, further south. The UNICEF report, noting that around 500 people suffering from the chronic diarrhoea have been admitted to hospitals in the province, said the Dohuk authorities would not be able to handle the epidemics. With the water supply restricted by the electricity cut-off, the authorities cannot inform the public about the dangers of water pollution because the television network is down. The U.S. State Department's Office of Foreign Disaster aid is investigating how to bring generators into the region. The European Community granted \$16 million of aid to Iraq for the summer of 1993, 13 per cent of which was allocated to the energy needs of the Kurds. Parts of northern Iraq have been controlled by the Kurds since the end of the Gulf war of 1991.

Iraq complains of U.N. bullying

By Andrew Katell
The Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS — First it was a demand for Iraq to scrap its weapons of mass destruction. Then Baghdad was to reveal its foreign weapons suppliers. Then it was to accept long-term monitoring of its weapons programmes.

The list of U.N. demands has been growing as U.N. inspectors nibble at Iraq's military powers, shifting the line in the sand each time.

Iraqi and U.N. officials are to meet here next week to review Baghdad's complaints that it is being bullied.

Iraq accuses U.N. weapons inspectors of trying to keep it on the defensive and perhaps bring down President Saddam Hussein. The United Nations says it is following a consistent strategy to ensure Iraq complies with Gulf war ceasefire terms.

Since the Security Council decided to strip Baghdad of its nuclear, biological and chemical weapons as punishment for its invasion of Kuwait three years ago this month, confrontations between the United Nations and Iraq have been frequent, and sometimes violent.

After Iraq refused to allow unconditional travel by U.N.

weapons inspectors and guarantee their safety, U.S. warships in January fired missiles at what Washington said was a factory near Baghdad involved in uranium enrichment. In June, the Security Council warned Iraq it faced a military strike if it did not allow U.N. inspectors to install cameras at missile test sites.

Experts outside the United Nations say many of the problems have occurred because the inspectors are writing the book as they go about demilitarising a country and because Iraq has not been cooperating.

Rolf Ekeus, head of the U.N. Special Commission making the weapons inspections, says Iraq has "systematically" tried to limit U.N. investigators' rights as well as its own ceasefire obligations.

"It is continuously Iraq that has created these series of problems," Mr. Ekeus said in an interview with The Associated Press.

Iraq counters that it has been cooperating with weapons inspectors and has not been rewarded with an easing of economic sanctions. It says it is entitled to acknowledgment of its progress in complying with ceasefire terms and a list of what else it must do before sanctions can be eased. A 15-member Iraqi

delegation headed by General Amer Rasheed, chief of Iraq's Military-Industrial Commission, is expected to make these arguments in a meeting with Mr. Ekeus at U.N. headquarters on Aug. 31.

While Mr. Ekeus and outside specialists give Iraq credit for coming clean in a number of areas, they say the inspectors are not finished and do not think Iraq should be given too much information about their plans, such as what monitoring equipment they will use.

"The last thing in the world one wishes to do is give the monitored country advance notice of how you're going to do it. You give them a lot of time to figure out how to get around your steps," said Peter D. Zimmerman of the Centre for International Strategic Studies, a Washington thinktank.

Iraq's complaint that it is being bullied might find some sympathy among Third World nations, but not in Washington.

"Iraq has brought its own troubles onto itself, so I don't think the question of fairness is even an appropriate question. Iraq has committed an international aggression and they deserve to be punished," said Kenneth Timmerman, a staff member

of the house sub-committee on international organisations and human rights.

A former Bush administration official says Iraq deserves to be treated like a pariah.

"Iraq forfeited the normal rights to sovereignty by what it's done to its people and its neighbours. It is fair, warranted and necessary," contended Richard Haass, who was President George Bush's National Security Council director for the Middle East.

David Kaye, deputy leader of nuclear inspections in Iraq from March 1991-January 1992, believes the United Nations' handling of the inspections has seemed haphazard because of Iraq's "cheat and retreat" approach — lying about its weapons programmes, then telling the truth when challenged.

Even with intrusive inspections, 28 Security Council resolutions, the use of force and diplomacy, some observers doubt the United Nations will ever be able to declare that Iraq has met all demands and made a "full and complete disclosure" of its weapons programmes, as the Security Council has demanded.

"We still don't know it all and we probably won't," said Paul Beaver, editor of Jane's Defence Weekly in London.

Egypt seizes book on sheikh

CAIRO (R) — Police have ordered a publisher to impound a book on militant Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman which alleges Egyptian government figures met Muslim militants, the book's author and publisher said Tuesday.

Publisher Essam Kameledin Mohammed said Interior Ministry officers made him sign a written undertaking not to distribute the book, called "Omar Abdul Rahman, the Earthquake that Shook the World," until further notice.

"It's a political book and so it is subject to the normal rules and censorship. I have 3,000 copies here and will keep them until the book is cleared," he said.

He said police told him on Sunday they were studying the book but gave no specific reason for the order.

Author Mohammad said it described meetings between government figures and militants — a sensitive issue for the government which has denied negotiating with militants waging a campaign to overthrow it.

Mr. Mohammad said the book described a meeting between Sheikh Abdul Rahman and former Interior Minister Abdul Halim Musa, sacked by President Hosni Mubarak in April when he indicated he had met independent Islamic clerics mediating for the militants.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO
18:00 Les Histoires Chevalier de Grioux
19:00 News in French
19:15 Ushuaia
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 Night Court
21:10 Doc. "Un Monde Nouveau"
22:00 News in English
22:20 Shattered Promises

PRAYER TIMES

04:39 Fajr
06:01 (Sunrise) Duha
12:38 Dhuhr
19:15 Asr
22:37 Maghreb

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church, Sweithel, Tel. 810749
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church, Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation, Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church, Tel. 661757
Terra Sancta Church, Tel. 622366

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541

Anglican Church Tel. 630831, Tel. 628543
Roman Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Assiout International Church Tel. 625226
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 823824, 654932
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
Normal summer weather conditions will prevail and winds will be north-westerly light to moderate. In Aqaba winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp.
Amman 20/32
Aqaba 25/41
Deserts 17/35
Jordan Valley 24/39

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 31, Aqaba 38. Humidity readings:

Amman 32 per cent, Aqaba 19 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Ahmad Othman 786384
Dr. Ghaleb Zawahid 730111
Dr. Adnan Al Zuhairi 898140
Dr. Fadel Bilal 663412
Fins pharmacy 661912
Ferdows pharmacy 778336
Al Asama pharmacy 637055
Nairookh pharmacy 626672
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shmeisani pharmacy 637660
Nairookh pharmacy 626672
Najib pharmacy 847632

IRBID:
Dr. Mohammad Al Khalili 277757
Al Ouds pharmacy (—)

ZARQA:
Dr. Hussein Hussain 984344
Khalifah pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 63041
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 891228
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 63031
Hotel Complaints 602800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010290
Central Amman Telephone Repairs 633101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Husseini Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalid Maternity, J. Amn. 644281/6
Abdali Maternity, J. Amn. 64241/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 942362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine Samiouni 664171/4
Shmeisani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 843043
Al-Mushter Hospital 66227/9
The Islamic, Abdali 666127/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajireen 777101/3
Al-Basrah, J. Amn. 775111/26
Army, Abdali 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 642240/50
Amal Hospital 674155

ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)83323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)80360
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)86732
Al Fikra Modern Hospital (09)90990

IRBID:
Princess Beena Hospital (02)27555
Creek Catholic Hospital (02)27275
Ibn Al Nafes Hospital (02)24100

AQABA:
Princess Maya Hospital (03)31411

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA

INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

06:00 Dubai (RJ)
06:15 Abu Dhabi (RJ)
06:30 Beirut (RJ)
06:45 Larnaca (RJ)
06:50 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
07:00 Toronto (RJ)
07:15 London (RJ)
07:30 Frankfurt (RJ)
07:45 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
08:00 Brussels, Paris (RJ)
08:15 Madrid, Geneva (RJ)
08:30 Rome (RJ)
08:45 Athens (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

05:45 Rome (AZ)
06:45 Beirut (ME)
06:55 Dubai (EM)
07:00 Athens (TY)
07:10 Jeddah (SU)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

05:00 Madrid (RJ)
05:15 Frankfurt (RJ)
05:30 Rome (RJ)
05:45 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
05:55 Berlin, London (RJ)
06:00 Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)
06:15 Istanbul (RJ)
06:30 Athens (RJ)
06:45 Colombo (RJ)
06:50 Aqaba, Cairo (RJ)
07:00 Samara (RJ)
07:15 Dhahran (RJ)
07:30 Riyadh (RJ)
07:45 New Delhi (RJ)
07:55 Aden (RJ)
08:00 Calcutta, Bangkok (RJ)
08:15 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)

Other



'Crescent Night' performers at Tuesday's premier blend dance, music and song to portray different aspects of traditional and modern Jordan

NHF's Theatre-in-Education presents 'Crescent Night'

AMMAN — Her Majesty Queen Noor Tuesday night attended the premier of the musical choreography 'Crescent Night' produced by the Noor Al Hussein Foundation's Theatre-in-Education Programme — at the Royal Cultural Centre in Amman.

Choreographed by Rania Kamhawi, designed and directed by Lina Al Tal, 'Crescent Night' portrays different aspects of traditional and modern Jordan through a blend of dance, dabkeh, rhythm, melody and song. It highlights Jordan's distinct seasons and colourful landscapes, the Jordanian people's attachment to the land, to warm family relations and to the spirit of tolerance and cooperation.

Through dance and poetry, 'Crescent Night' also brings to the stage the adverse effects of war and famine on the world's children and accentuates Jordan's aspirations for peaceful co-existence in a harmonious world.

Personally supported by Queen Noor who actively promotes understanding of Jordanian society and culture at the international level, 'Crescent Night' will be featured at the International Children's Festival (ICF) at Wolf Trap Farm Park for the Performing Arts in Vienna, Virginia, in the U.S. this September.

The ICF provides young people from 23 countries with the opportunity for cross-cultural interaction and understanding as a step towards a more peaceful world.

This musical production reflects NHF's integrated development endeavours to promote and enhance Jordan's culture, heritage and the arts: NHF's National Music Conservatory provided the musical talent through its director, staff and performing students, and, NHF's Jordan Design and Trade Centre — which trains and supports women to produce quality Jordanian handicrafts — provided the stage setting and artifacts which added a decorum emanating from Jordan's rich culture and tradition.

The Theatre-in-Education Programme attempts, through the creative medium of drama, to transform Jordan's everyday life into a very enjoyable spectacle.

'Crescent Night' is the fifth theatre production of NHF's Theatre-in-Education Programme which was launched in 1987 to enhance the development of the educational process in Jordan through the creative medium of drama; and, to promote dramatic arts.

Queen Noor was accompanied by Her Royal Highness Princess Aishah and Princess Eman. Also attending were the secretaries general of the Ministries of Culture and Education, the NHF president, members of the NHF Board of Trustees, Mr. Douglas Keene, the Charge D'affaires at the American embassy and senior government officials.

Crown Prince Award competitors begin volunteer service in Tafileh

AMMAN (Petra) — Part of a group of university students competing for the 1993 Crown Prince Award and operating under Al Sabila Project Tuesday began voluntary activities to benefit the local communities in the Tafileh governorate.

In three days, the students will carry out maintenance work at schools and local charitable societies and will organise a seminar on the role of Tafileh in the Great Arab Revolt, in addition to organising visits to the Dana Wildlife Reserve.

Al Sabila is operating under the supervision of Sharifa Zein Nasser who said that the project is backed by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan.

The project seeks to spread its services to all parts of the country, noted Sharifa Zein.

The Sabila group last week embarked on a large scale voluntary services drive in different regions including Tafileh.

The programme, which lasts for 25 days, entails construction and maintenance work, opening water canals, dredging others and carrying out recreational functions including mountain climbing.

The same group, which is active in Tafileh, will later move on to Karak and Ma'an.

Al Sabila project, introduced in 1990, encourages university students and other youth to volunteer and interact with local communities as a part of the competition for the Crown Prince Award.

Centre for the blind in financial crisis

AMMAN (Petra) — The Amman-based Regional Centre for the Rehabilitation of Blind Women is facing a financial crisis now that most of the Gulf states have stopped providing funds for its operations, according to Sheikh Abdullah Al Ghanem, the centre's general director.

"Only Saudi Arabia and Bahrain are still providing funds for the centre which requires additional sums to cater to its growing needs and expansion," said Sheikh Ghanem Tuesday.

He appealed to the wealthy citizens of Jordan and local and regional organisations to extend assistance to the centre.

"Each year the centre admits 60 new women aged 15 to 35 from various countries of the Middle East," said Sheikh Ghanem. They are provided full accommodation plus health care and clothing during their stay, and they receive training in knitting, weaving, sewing, handling telephone exchanges, music and domestic science, Sheikh Ghanem explained.

The centre, which was founded in 1974 to care for blind women, also trains them to become independently mobile with the aid of a walking stick, he added.

"So far 75 women have graduated after learning a trade, enabling them to achieve their place in the society and earn a living," according to Sheikh Ghanem.

"The centre provides the women with JD 10 in monthly pocket money during their training and seeks to find them jobs after their course are completed. It also often provides sewing machines for them to work at home," Sheikh Ghanem added.

Referring to obstacles other than the financial matters, Sheikh Ghanem said the centre sometimes has difficulty in persuading the women's parents to send them for training at the centre.

"We are looking forward to setting up a large centre to care for 200 rather than 60 women every year," Sheikh Ghanem said.

"It is hoped such a centre would provide education and training from the primary to secondary stages, and ensure jobs for the graduates," he continued.

As part of the efforts to raise funds for the centre, Sheikh Ghanem announced that a sponsored march will be held on Sept. 30 in Amman under the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Noor.

"This march is intended to direct public attention to the needs of these women and to raise funds for the centre's projects," noted Sheikh Ghanem, who is also head of a Middle East committee for the care of the blind in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

On the committee are representatives of Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain, Yemen, Syria, Turkey, Lebanon, Iran, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Oman and Afghanistan.

Education ministry reports on projects, building progress

AMMAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Education is currently building 1,370 classrooms as annexes to existing schools run by the ministry in several regions for completion by the end of 1993, according to Abdul Razak Maani, director of the ministry's Projects and School Buildings Department.

At the same time work is under way for providing 168 school buildings with laboratories, libraries and workshops, he said in a statement Tuesday.

The construction of 152 school buildings which are being completed in three stages began in 1989, said Mr. Maani. The fourth stage will be carried out in 1994, he added.

The effort to build schools instead of renting buildings was motivated by the 1987 National Educational Conference which recommended an overhaul of the educational system in Jordan, said Mr. Maani, an engineer.

He noted that because of the ministry's implemented plans, the number of rented buildings has now dropped from 42 per cent before 1989 to 18 per cent at present.

Schools used for the two-shift system have also dropped from 19 per cent to 11 per cent, he said, adding that by 1998 there will not be a single rented building used for a school by the ministry.

Referring to other ministry achievements Mr. Maani said that since 1989, the ministry has set up two teachers clubs, one in Amman and the other in Irbid; and organised two scout camps one in Dibbin near Jerash and the other in Aqaba.

He said the ministry has started building its own warehouses to store textbooks in Amman and there are plans to build two other store houses, one in Zarqa and the other in Irbid.

In addition, work on three sports halls in Tafleeh, Shobak and Wadi Mousa are under way.

Mr. Maani said that the ministry now has 100 housing units for teachers in remote areas.

The right to occupy these units expires if the teacher decides to move to a different region, he explained.

In accordance with the plans formulated at the 1987 conference, the ministry is expected to build a total of 430 schools



The Ministry of Education plans to build 430 schools around the Kingdom, taking into account the annual increase in the number of the nation's school-age children (File photo)

around the Kingdom, while, taking into account the annual increase in the number of students.

Mr. Maani's statement came four days after the reopening of schools for the 1993-94 scholastic year. At least 1.35 million students are back in schools for the first semester of the new year.

Civil service office plans amendments to internal system

AMMAN (Petra) — The Civil Service Commission (CSC) is introducing wide-ranging amendments to its own system aimed at transferring some ministerial authorities in Amman to the provincial governors and helping the government implement its decentralisation programme, according to CSC President Abdullah Ulayan.

A plan to this effect has been prepared and will be submitted to the government for approval, Mr. Ulayan said Tuesday.

Under the new plans, a governor is authorised to appoint new employees and transfer others upon the recommendation of a special committee chaired by the governor himself, added Mr. Ulayan.

Furthermore, the CSC will shortly submit to the government for approving an integrated plan with job descriptions for public administration positions, he explained.

If the Council of Ministers approves the descriptions, the plan will be put into force at the beginning of next year, he added.

Explaining the work of the CSC, Mr. Ulayan said the office does not create public administration jobs, but rather recruits candidates for the various departments to fill vacant positions.

It is hoped, he said, that the CSC will be empowered to hold examination sessions for the competing candidates in order to determine their potentials and capabilities before taking up government posts, Mr. Ulayan added.

Referring to the applicants for public administration positions, Mr. Ulayan noted that the CSC now has 57,756 applications, of whom 38 per cent are from male applicants.

Shipping agents to review consequences of sanctions against Iraq on Aqaba Port

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A meeting being held at the port city of Aqaba today is expected to focus attention on the severe blow Jordan's only sea outlet has suffered as a result of what officials describe as the overzealous enforcement of the sanctions against Iraq.

The meeting, which will bring together the agents of Sudan Shipping Lines in Europe and the Middle East, will also make a pitch towards convincing international shipping companies to resume their regular service to Aqaba.

"We will present a comprehensive report on the facilities and equipment available at Aqaba, which is a key port in the region despite the present setbacks," said Rimon Suleiman, assistant general manager of T. Gargour & Fils, agents of the Sudanese lines in Jordan.

The one-day meeting, attended by some 20 visitors in addition to local shipping officials and agents, will also hear reports about the impact of what many see as a de facto blockade of Aqaba as a result of the cumbersome inspection procedures and guidelines imposed by the enforcers of the sanctions against Iraq patrolling the Red Sea.

Translated into economic terms, these measures mean costly delays and diversions for Aqaba-bound ships. In turn, ship owners and charterers levy higher freight and related charges, making Jordanian imports artificially more expensive and leading to higher market prices for the consumer.

The delays also scramble production schedules of industrial units.

As a rule, shipowners and charterers quote higher freight charges for their ships to call at Aqaba, and this has also led to Jordan losing its competitive edge in the international phosphate and potash market, officials say.

Although Jordan's state-owned companies exporting phosphate and potash have not suffered losses, their profit margins have plunged since they have to buffer

the higher freight factor in the net prices for the buyers.

The Sudan Shipping Lines, a government-owned company established in 1962, has a special interest in Aqaba because of the regular calls of its fleet at the Red Sea port.

It has been one of the shipping lines regularly "harassed" by the U.S.-led naval task force patrolling the Red Sea, inspecting every vessel heading for and leaving Aqaba.

Despite what it sees as a deliberate targeting of Sudanese vessels in the enforcement campaign, the Sudanese firm has refused to suspend its services to Aqaba, said Mr. Suleiman of Gargour.

"In many cases, the company has declined to charge the importers the higher cost it incurred as a result of the diversion of Aqaba-bound cargo to other Red Sea ports such as Port Sa'id, Port Sudan, Hodeidah, Jeddah and Suez," he said.

By design or coincidence, a Sudanese shipping line vessel carrying iron pipes was among the first vessels to be intercepted and blocked from proceeding after the sanctions went into force. Since then almost every Sudanese ship calling at Aqaba has had some or another problem with the enforcers.

More than 40 international shipping lines had regular service to Aqaba prior to the Gulf crisis. The number has now dwindled to 15.

"We believe the Aqaba meeting will be an excellent opportunity to present Jordan's case to international shipping agents," said Mr. Suleiman.

"We have to convince the international shipping community of the significance of Aqaba and of the wisdom on resuming and opening regular services to the port."

Attending the Aqaba meeting will be Aqaba Ports Corporation Director-General Dureid Mahasneh and Sudan Shipping Lines Chairman Ali Ahmad Abdul Rahim along with senior management aides.

Wildlife experts address modern preservation methods

AMMAN (J.T.) — Three wildlife and rare species experts from the University of Maine in the United States, Tuesday delivered lectures on modern techniques employed in the preservation of animals.

The lectures were part of a four-day workshop organised by the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN) in cooperation with the University of Jordan, Yarmouk University and the University of Maine.

The focus of the discussions was the Shaumari Wildlife Reserve in the Azraq region.

"We are doing all we can to protect and save the lives of the animals kept and reared in the six wildlife reserves created by the RSCN in Jordan," said Maher Abu Jaafar, the RSCN director, at the start of the meeting at the RSCN.

In his address Mr. Abu Jaafar reviewed the RSCN's activities to protect those species threatened with extinction, pointing to its efforts to gather the rare species and keep them in these reserves.

Following the first session, the participants visited Shaumari Reserve.

In 1975 the RSCN established the Shaumari Reserve as the first rare species sanctuary in the Kingdom.

Its 320 square kilometres are



The Arabian oryx has been saved from extinction through the efforts of wildlife experts and concerned parties

entirely fenced-in to protect it from neighbouring grazing domestic livestock.

At present, Shaumari serves as a main breeding centre for locally-extinct or endangered species, mainly the Arabian oryx.

In the four-day workshop several working papers dealing with animal management, planning for reserves and other related matters will be tackled.

Among the participants are representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Children's Society for the Conservation of Nature in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, whose representative, Imad Al Atrash, presented a set of books and research papers by West Bank specialists dealing with birds of Palestine and other wildlife in the occupied territories.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Housing minister to attend conference in Cairo

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Public Works and Housing Khalaf Hawari will leave for Cairo Saturday to take part in the 40th session of the Council of Arab Ministers of Housing and Reconstruction Executive Bureau, which will be held there on Aug. 29. The two-day session will focus on the preparation of standard Arab construction codes, holding specialised symposia on construction, housing and urban development. Meanwhile a team representing the Ministry left for Cairo Tuesday to take part in a four-day meeting by a technical committee. The delegation is led by Haitham Mreish, an advisor to the minister of public works.

NAF assists 453 families

AMMAN (Petra) — The National Aid Fund (NAF) last week paid JD 13,667 to 453 needy families in Jordan. The payment falls within the recurrent monthly payments for the needy, according to Khaled Gheimeh, the NAF director general. The fund paid JD 29,500 last week to finance vocational training for 37 needy people.

Free medical day held in Shafa Badran

MADABA (Petra) — The Applied Sciences University Tuesday organised a free medical day at Shafa Badran on the outskirts of Amman to mark His Majesty King Hussein's accession to the throne. Doctors examined the treated patients and dispensed needed drugs free of charge. Participating in the day was Greater Amman Mayor Mamdouh Al Abbadi.

Jordan to participate in art festival in Syria

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan will take part in the International Basra Al Sham Festival of Art and Culture, which will be held in the Syrian City of Basra during the second week of September. Also taking part in the festival will be Syria, Egypt, Lebanon, Kuwait, Yemen, Tunisia, Palestine, China, India, Italy, Russia, Bulgaria and Armenia. The festival includes exhibitions of traditional industries, plastic art, books.

Over 50% pass community college exam

AMMAN (Petra) — The overall pass rate at the Comprehensive Community College examination is 55.99 per cent, according to Secretary General of the Ministry of Higher Education Ahmad Al Hisban. Dr. Hisban was speaking at a press conference Tuesday, during which he announced results of the comprehensive examination for the year 1993. He said that 10,831 students out of a total of 19,342, divided among 83 major subjects, passed the examination.

Islamic council appeals to U.N.

AMMAN (Petra) — The Amman-based World Islamic Council for Dawa and Relief Tuesday sent a cable to the United Nations Secretary General Boutros Ghali, voicing deep concern about the Croatian measures aimed at interrupting the work of Islamic relief organisations working in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The council called on Dr. Ghali to intervene with the Croatian government to stop such measures and ensure the smooth flow of international relief supplies and the freedom of movement of relief workers.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ Art exhibition by Iraqi artist Shaker Al Shadi at Alia Art Gallery.
- ★ Exhibition of paintings by 25 Jordanian artists at the Housing Bank exhibition hall.
- ★ Exhibition of paintings by Jordanian artist Bishara Najjar at Eshebbel Art Gallery, Amra Shopping Centre. The paintings depict Jordanian-Palestinian heritage, Jordanian antiquities, Arab Jerusalem, rural life and

natural scenery.

NEW GALLERY

- ★ Opening of new art gallery, "Dar al Fannan," of the Abdul Majed Shoman Foundation. Programme includes the permanent exhibition and the "Chair" exhibition in Jabal Lovelbach.

PLAYS

- ★ Play entitled "Crescent Night" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

FILM

- ★ Feature film: "Revenge of the Pink Panther" at the British Council at 7:00 p.m.

Jordan Times

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MAHMOUD AL KAYED

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Yinhe in deep waters

THE SHADOWING of a Chinese freighter by the U.S. Navy in Gulf waters since Aug. 3 may appear benign and insignificant in the short term. In the long run, however, the incident may end up triggering a chain of reactions in Peking with serious consequences for international peace and stability.

The Chinese ship, Yinhe, is suspected of carrying chemical weapons for Iran. But while there is broad agreement among the comity of nations that there must be an end to the manufacture and deployment of chemical weapons and other weapons of mass destruction by all countries, especially those that lack stability and democracy, the method for controlling the proliferation of chemical weapons must also appear to be just and reasonable. In the case of the Yinhe, the U.S. warships that are stopping the cargo ship from even leaving the Gulf waters are doing the wrong thing because they are there ostensibly to enforce sanctions against Iraq, not Iran. On this score alone, the U.S. action appears to lack legitimacy and therefore calls for an immediate rectification.

We have seen how U.S. naval forces can exceed their mandate in the Aqaba Gulf region as well, by pretending to act on the basis of enforcing U.N. Security Council resolutions on Iraq. The end result of this action is that free and unimpeded international shipping will be hindered with dire economic consequences for many states.

There must be a higher authority that controls such actions other than the State Department or the Defence Ministry in Washington. Small states affected by precipitous actions like this by the U.S. can take interference with their free shipping rights rather stoically. But the interference with the shipping of China is something else. The humiliation that Peking has suffered at the sight of one of its ships being stopped in high seas for inspection by a superpower could prod China into counteractions in order to stop future humiliations. Chinese authorities may soon conclude that the most effective way to do so is by seeking more aggressively the status of full superpower, on par with the U.S. itself.

China is a fast growing country, with one of the highest expanding economies in the world. It also has developed very sophisticated technologies and is therefore able, in a relatively short period of time, to meet all kinds of challenges to its pride and sovereignty. Washington is pushing Peking into that direction by intimidating and humiliating it in the way it has been doing of late.

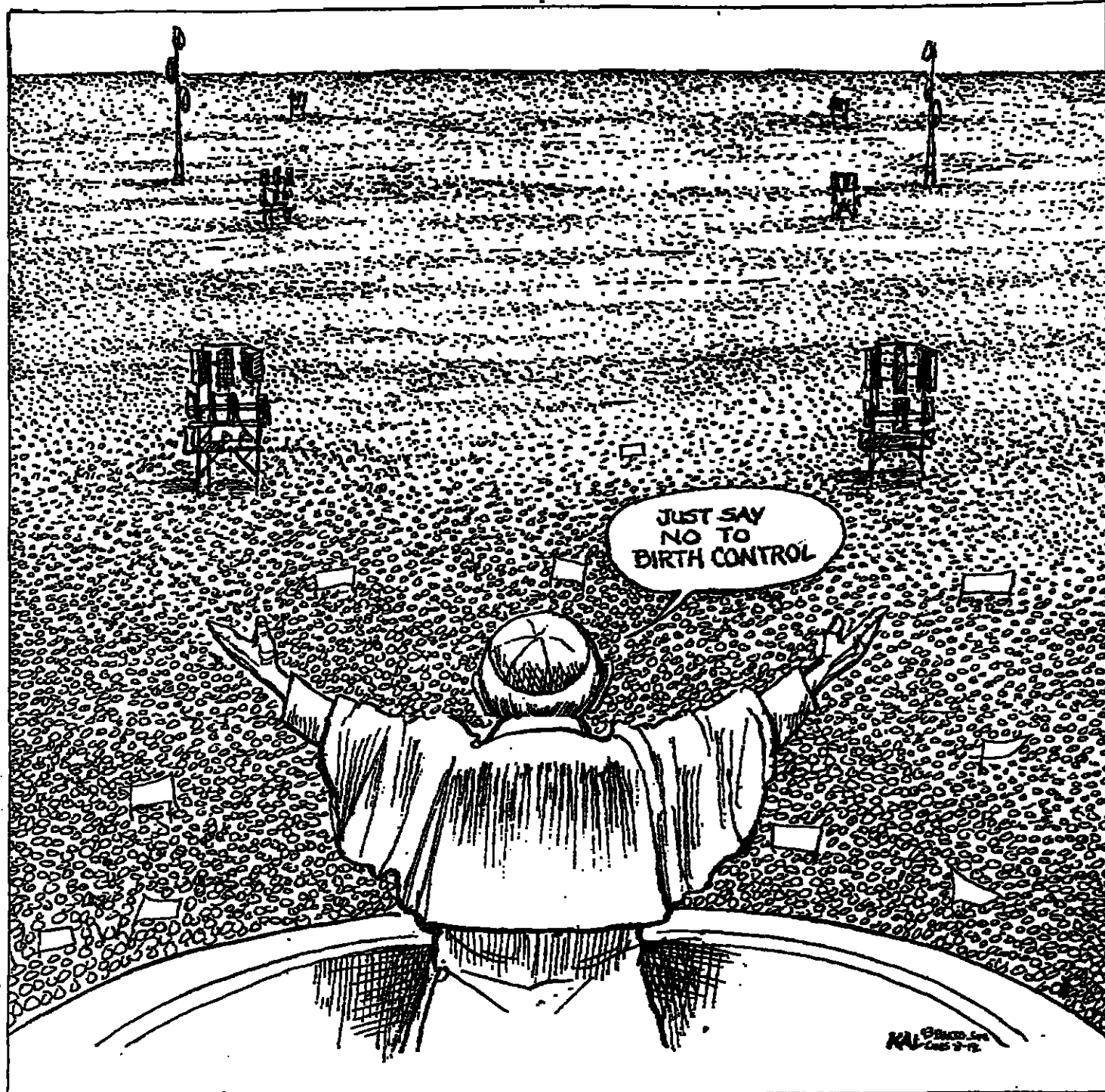
There is no quarrel with the proposition that the Middle East and the Gulf regions should be free of weapons of mass destruction. And so should, so many other regions of the world be. But there must be a better way to realise this objective than to resort to unilateral actions.

The most troubling aspect of the issue at hand is selectivity. There must be universal standards and rules for all countries, big or small, to follow. The international order must address problems of this nature in a more sophisticated and legitimate manner, well before the world is once again driven to the brink of nuclear terror.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

THE PEACE talks started in Madrid after the Jordanian and the Palestinian sides coordinated their positions and stands vis-a-vis the common cause and it is imperative on both to maintain these coordination efforts until the end, said Sawt Al Shabab daily. Indeed, coordination between the two sides served as the basis for joint action at the negotiating table, regarding Israel, and the Jordanians have to date refrained from taking any step without first ensuring that sufficient progress is being made along the Israeli-Palestinian track, continued the daily. The paper, which referred to King Hussein's statement in an interview with Agence France Presse, about the need for more coordination between the Palestinians and the Jordanians, said that coordination should involve the status of Jerusalem. The King said that there can be no solution without the settlement of issues revolving around the Holy City, added the paper. The King has made it clear that the first step on the road of ensuring liberation of occupied lands lies in Jordanian-Palestinian coordination at all levels. Referring to the projected confederation project, the paper echoed the King's words that only after the Palestinians have ensured their self-determination can such a step be contemplated. At the same time, and while coordination continues, the paper said, Jordan would never cease its full support for the Palestinian people, enabling them to regain their full, legitimate rights in their homeland.

COMMENTING ON the creation of the shura council in Saudi Arabia, a columnist in Al Ra'i daily said that such a step was in the right direction although it came late. Mahmoud Rimawi said that the council constituted the first step towards carrying out political reform, but still falls far short of other steps taken by other Gulf countries in this direction. In view of the developments at the regional and international levels and the increasing burdens on Saudi Arabia, there has been urgent need for political reforms and there were calls for such a step in the 1980s and early 1990s, said Rimawi. It is true that the Saudi leadership had achieved a lot for the people at the domestic level, but there is need for the people to sit in the rule of the country and there is need for more freedoms under the umbrella of the law, demanded Rimawi. He said it would have been better for Saudi Arabia to have a fully elected parliament rather than a shura council various legislations and laws.



Novelists take on Mexico's political system

By Isaac A. Levi
The Associated Press

MEXICO CITY — A bookstore chain is boycotting Rafael Loret de Mola's latest novel, which says some unpleasant things about the ruling party, and a pro-government magazine made a lengthy attack on the book.

While describing the short novel "Interim President" as "subliterature that slanders," the magazine, Siempre, acknowledged that it was "must reading in Mexican political circles."

Because of the boycott by the Sanborn's chain, which accounts for about one-third of book sales in Mexico City, Mr. Loret picks its branches and sells autographed copies on the sidewalk outside.

"If it's such an insignificant work, why does the magazine (Siempre) use two pages to say it?" Mr. Loret, 40, said in an interview, "and the sales people at Sanborn's give all sorts of excuses. That it hasn't been delivered, that they've run out and so on."

A few years ago, he might have been sent into exile for writing such a book, or quietly advised to leave Mexico for reasons of health.

The Institutional Revolutionary Party, known as the PRI, has wielded virtually complete power in Mexico since 1929, and criticising it can be risky.

At least 30 Mexican journalists have been murdered since 1982. After Mauricio Gonzalez de la Garza published "Last Call" in 1981, comparing the PRI to the dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz, two federal policemen put him on a plane for Texas.

Before "Interim President" was published, Mr. Loret was advised to leave the country because of his other critical writings. He went to France for four months.

Mr. Loret's father Carlo Loret de Mola, a former state governor, wrote books accusing the party of forsaking the ideals of the Mexican revolution. He was killed in 1986 — in a car wreck, said police, by assassination, said his son. The nearly complete manuscript of his latest book was missing.

Mariana Dornbier wrote in the newspaper Excelsior about the brothers of President Carlos Salinas de Gortari and a deal to renew the Mexico City racetrack licence. She no longer writes for the paper.

Lately, dissident writers have been encouraged by a more tolerant PRI attitude.

Many of Mr. Loret's characters are thinly disguised officials of the current government, and there is much talk around water coolers of their real identities.

He and many of the other dissidents are or were journalists. Most of their books aim at the Salinas administration, which ends next year.

Among the favourite topics are corruption, electoral fraud and what the authors present as the secret wish of many presidents for more than the single six-year term permitted by the constitution.

"Journalists are writing in novels and books what they can't write in newspapers and magazines," Ms. Dornbier said.

After her report on the president's brothers, she said, "Excelsior dropped me and others didn't

want to have anything to do with me."

Why is the government being gentler with its new critics?

"Books do not have as much projection nationally as, say, television or radio," Mr. Loret said. "And probably the government feels banning them could create a worse problem."

A paperback edition costs \$7 or more in a country with a daily minimum wage equivalent to about \$4.50.

In Mexico, a president chooses his successor and the PRI experts, popularly called "alchemists," or "electoral engineers," take care of the rest.

Journalists are frequently bought and most media chant the PRI candidate's virtues, largely ignoring the opposition.

Mr. Loret's "Interim President" approaches the question of electoral fraud tangentially.

President Cesar, yearning for a second term, designates his older brother Pancho to succeed him, thinking Pancho can be manipulated. But when Pancho becomes "the candidate," he starts making his own decisions.

A bomb blows Pancho to bits the day after the election and Cesar stays on, calling a new election without counting the votes.

This rubbed raw spots in high places, given rumours that the PRI wants to change the law prohibiting reelection, a sacred tenet of the 1917 constitution.

Since publication in February, Mr. Loret's novel has sold 20,000 copies. Selling a first printing of 3,500 copies is considered good in Mexico.

Ms. Dornbier wrote "Journalists Die at Night," about a news-magazine writer named Gil Duarte who is killed by machine-gun fire after the funeral of a journalist who also was assassinated. In heaven, he finds many assassinated colleagues.

"Journalists Die at Night" came out in June and also has sold 20,000 copies.

Anatomy of Corruption" by Gloria Lajous, another journalist, tells of embezzlement by officials at the Mexican Tourism Bureau in New York City.

Ms. Lajous, 73, worked in the bureau for 3 1/2 years. When the government sent auditors to check up on the real-life case, she said in an interview, they were bribed with a \$14,000 watch apiece to find nothing wrong.

Rafael Rodriguez Castaneda, 49, has written "Sold-out Press" a history of the Mexican newspaper business.

Mr. Rodriguez, managing editor of the independent news magazine Proceso, describes a relationship established between press barons and President Lázaro Cardenas in 1935, when newspaper was scarce and heavily taxed.

Mr. Cardenas set up a joint venture that imported paper duty-free and sold it to friendly newspapers on credit. According to Mr. Rodriguez, that put most newspapers solidly behind the PRI, essentially creating an official press.

Mr. Salinas said recently that the joint venture, still in business, was for sale to any publishers interested. There have been no takers.

To peace, by way of Jerusalem

By Milton Viorst

WASHINGTON — By all the rules of bargaining Jerusalem was supposed to be at the bottom of the agenda of the Arab-Israeli peace talks. In fact, under the 1991 Madrid agreement, Jerusalem — the most difficult and emotional issue — was not even supposed to be on the agenda.

Discussions about its future were to have been deferred for three years, while Palestinian autonomy was given a chance to work in the occupied territories. But the Palestinians have decided to go for broke in the talks, which resume Aug. 29.

They argue that they were coerced into accepting the Madrid rule by the Israeli refusal to deal under any other terms. They contend that Israel has shown few, if any, signs of a conciliatory spirit — in the talks and in its occupation of the territories — since the initial meeting at Madrid.

So why, they ask, should they believe that Israel will be more willing to grant concessions on Jerusalem three years hence?

The Israelis reply that a deal is a deal, and so far the United States, sponsor of the talks, has backed them. Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin has also said Israel will never give up any part of Jerusalem — a pledge that has given the Palestinians more incentive to face the issue now.

The Israelis say they need Jerusalem because it is the heart of Zionism. Jerusalem is a vision that nourished Jewish identity for 2,000 years.

But the Palestinians speak the truth in claiming Jerusalem is vital to their identity, too. Not only is it Islam's third holiest city but it has also been the heart of regional Arab culture through the centuries.

Must this dispute be a winner-take-all game in the negotiations?

Jerusalem's geography, and goodwill, could resolve the problem. East Jerusalem is totally Arab, West Jerusalem totally Jewish. Even the Old City is delineated, with the Dome of the Rock and the Arab quarter to the east, the Western Wall and the Jewish quarter (along with the Christian and Armenian quarters) to the west.

A separating line would be easy to draw. Surely, the Zionist dream does not require Israeli rule over the Islamic holy sites, much less the kebab shops and, yes, the shums of East Jerusalem. Israel has already made a concession on this point, in agreeing that under autonomy East Jerusalem would be under Arab rule.

Wouldn't Israel be better off without having to rule 100,000 unhappy East Jerusalemites? The Palestinians are taking a risk in challenging the Madrid agenda. But a resolution of the question could be the breakthrough to something bigger. Isn't this the moment for an agreement to change the rules and to reach for a comprehensive peace? — New York Times.

LETTERS

Horrific cruelty

To the Editor:

THIS SATURDAY lunch time, my boyfriend and I saw a horse lying on a piece of wasteland in Abdoun, next to the British embassy. When we approached it, we were appalled to see that it had received terrible injuries. We informed the Jordanian guard at the embassy gate, who immediately called the Department of the Environment and the police. A nearby soldier called his superior and asked if he could shoot the horse. But unfortunately, none of the agencies were able to act at that time and the use of ammunition in the capital is restricted. Local vets were not available. After a long series of telephone calls which brought the matter to the attention of various people, they grouped together and put the horse down that evening. Everyone who saw the horse, including those with veterinary training, agreed that its legs could not have been broken by an accident and that an act of terrible cruelty had been inflicted on the animal. The legs had been hacked with an axe or heavy knife and were completely mangled. I know from meeting the people in Amman, and from the number of calls received about the horse, that the people of Amman are kind and considerate and will join me in condemning the horrific wounding of the animal. This sad case highlights the need for a system which can deal quickly and effectively with situations of this type.

Catherine A. Hurlin,
Amman.

To the Editor:

A GROUP of people was horrified at the weekend to find a horse, with two broken forelegs, dumped on a pile of rubble in Abdoun during the night. Apparently, someone had called the Jordanian Society for the Protection of Animals (JSPA) two days earlier, after seeing the horse. But the horse had disappeared by the time JSPA people reached the place. Surprisingly, the horse workmen who came to the same place. It was discovered by looked as if they had been attacked with an axe as the cannon bones were both severed and the horse was standing on the knee stump of one leg in the baking sun while calls for help were ignored.

Eventually, after a delay of several hours, a local vet did arrive and the horse was put out of its misery. Police help was not very empowered to act in such an urgent case when other help cannot be found?

Ali Kassar,
Amman.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

Blacks cheer Mugabe on, whites fearful

By Cris Chinaka
Reuters

HARARE — Many black Zimbabweans are cheering President Robert Mugabe on as he lashes out at whites opposed to his policy of making them sell their farms.

But Mr. Mugabe's tough words are sowing fear and uncertainty among whites, damaging delicate race relations and putting at risk economic aid from the West, political analysts say.

Mr. Mugabe capped two weeks of tough talking last Friday by threatening to deport those whites who continue to resist his plans to resettle landless blacks on their land.

"There is still white racism in this country. That's the greatest enemy we have. We want to be united against racism and whites should change or they will be kicked out of this country," he told a rally in southwestern Zimbabwe.

"The whites think they are more God's children than others

and they still look at their white skin as more precious and more divine than ours," he said.

The government plan is to make the white farmers sell five million hectares and resettle hundreds of thousands of blacks on the land in the next two years.

Under the Land Acquisition Act passed in 1992, the farmers cannot challenge in court either the selection of farms or the price fixed by the government.

Mr. Mugabe has said that if they do try to go to court the government might seize the farms without compensation.

"If it comes to the worst we can just take the farms without paying anything because... the white settlers never compensated our forefathers when they took that land from them," he said.

Mr. Mugabe has also said Western countries, specifically Britain, Canada and the United States, oppose the land reform for racist reasons but all three have denied it, saying they think it morally just to correct the imbalances of the past.

The white-bashing has gone down well in rural Zimbabwe, where the majority of his supporters live in poverty and continue to resent economic domination by the white minority.

"They are cheering him out there but his conduct is damaging the racial fabric and long-term policies," one analyst said.

Mr. Mugabe won power in 1980 after leading a guerrilla war against white settler rule in which he promised the black majority a greater share in the country's most fertile land, 80 per cent of which is still held by 4,500 white farmers.

During the seven-year war, both sides saw Mr. Mugabe as a radical Marxist who would exact revenge on the white settlers.

About half the whites fled Zimbabwe at independence, leaving a white minority of 100,000 in a country of 10 million people.

But on taking power Mr. Mugabe promoted racial reconciliation, a policy which won him much praise abroad and which has helped to hold racial tensions

in check over the years.

White Zimbabweans generally try to play down the economic disparity between them and their black compatriots, portraying themselves as equal members of a multiracial society.

"The words black and white must be removed from our vocabulary. We should all consider ourselves Zimbabweans. It is not ideal at this stage that each race should blame the other," said white radio personality Noreen Welch.

Opposition parties have also criticised Mr. Mugabe's attacks on whites, saying they are an attempt to win votes in the general elections which must take place by 1995.

"Zanu-PF (the ruling party), for partisan reasons, is whipping up racial emotions and fears. Such an approach is irresponsible and short-sighted," said opposition leader Enock Dumbutshena.

"I think Zimbabwe stands to lose friends and all that comes with friendship if this continues," said a Western diplomat.

What on earth is the world coming to?

By Lester R. Brown

WHEN THE history of the late 20th century is written, the 1990s will be seen as a decade of discontinuity — a time when familiar trends that had seemed likely to go on forever, like smooth straight roads, came to abrupt bends or junctions and began descending abruptly. The world's production of steel, for example, had risen almost as reliably each year as the sun rises in the morning. The amount of coal extracted had risen almost uninterrupted ever since the Industrial Revolution began. The harvest of grain had grown much faster than population since the middle of this century and the oceanic fish catch had more than quadrupled, doubling the consumption of seafood per person.

These rising curves were seen as basic measures of human progress; we expected them to rise. But now, within just a few years, these trends have reversed, with consequences we have yet to grasp.

The discontinuities of the 1990s originate in the collision between expanding human numbers and needs, and the constraints of the earth's natural systems. Among these are the capacity of the oceans to yield seafood, of grasslands to produce beef and mutton, of the hydrological cycle to produce fresh water, of crops to use fertiliser, of the atmosphere to absorb greenhouse gases, of people of breath polluted air and forests to withstand acid rain. These constraints drew dramatically closer between 1950 and 1990, as the global economy expanded nearly five-fold.

Another major source of pressure was unprecedented population growth. Those of us born before 1950 have seen world population double. In 1950, 37 million people were added to the world's population. Last year, 91 million were added. We struggle to find ways to grasp the magnitude of 91 million people. It means that we are adding 250,000 people to the world every day and a city the size of New York every month.

On a finite planet, such growth is beginning to take a social toll. The production of grain, perhaps the most basic economic measure of human well-being, increased 2.6 fold from 1950, to 1984. Expanding a nearly three per cent per year, it outstripped population growth, leading to an increase in per capita grain consumption of 40 per cent over the

period, improving nutrition and boosting consumption of livestock products — meat, milk, eggs and cheese — throughout the world. But during the eight years since 1984, world grain output has expanded perhaps one per cent per year — and in per capita terms, it has declined one per cent per year since then.

This faltering of basic food-stuffs was triggered by other, earlier discontinuities of growth — in the supply of cropland, irrigation water and agricultural technologies. Cropland, measured in terms of grain-harvested area, expanded more or less continuously from the beginning of agriculture until 1981. Since then, it has not increased at all. Gains of cropland in some countries have been offset by losses in others.

Similarly with irrigation. After the middle of this century, growth in irrigated area accelerated, averaging nearly three per cent per year until 1978. Then, as the number of prime dam construction sites diminished and underground aquifers were depleted by overpumping, the growth of irrigated area fell behind that of population.

Although there was little new land to plow from mid-century onwards, the world's farmers achieved the largest expansion of food output in history by dramatically raising land productivity. The engine of growth was fertiliser use, which increased nine-fold in three decades to 126 million tonnes in 1984 before starting to slow.

In 1990, the rise in fertiliser use — which had been one of the most predictable trends in the world economy — came to a halt. In the former Soviet Union, fertiliser use actually dropped after 1988, as reforms moved fertiliser prices up to world market levels. More broadly, however, growth in world fertiliser use has slowed simply because existing grain varieties in the United States, western Europe and Japan cannot economically use much more fertiliser.

The backlog of unused agricultural technology that began to expand rapidly in the mid-19th century now appears to be diminishing. Most of the known means of raising food output are already in wide use. The highest-yielding rice variety available to farmers in Asia in 1993 was released in 1966 — more than a quarter-century ago. Today,

progressive farmers are peering over the shoulders of agricultural scientists looking for new help in boosting production, only to find not much is forthcoming.

The growth in meat production, like that of grain, is slowing. Between 1950 and 1987, world meat production increased almost four fold, boosting the amount per person from 18 kilograms to 32 kilograms. Since 1987, however, it has not increased at all. Underlying this overall stagnation is a rather dramatic slowdown in the production of beef and mutton, resulting from the inability of grasslands to support more cattle and sheep. From 1950 to 1990, world beef output increased 2.5-fold. But from 1990 to 1992 — with grasslands almost fully used or overused on every continent — per capita beef production for the world fell six per cent.

The supply of fish, like that of meat, no longer keeps pace with increases in human numbers. Here, too, there has been a reversal of the historic trend. Between 1950 and 1989, with the aid of increased numbers of ships and more sophisticated fishing technologies, the global catch expanded almost fivefold to 100 million tonnes. Now, United Nations marine biologists believe the oceans may have reached their limit. The world's ocean catch per capita declined seven per cent from 1989 until 1992 and is likely to continue declining if population continues to grow. As a result, seafood prices are rising steadily.

Getting more animal protein, whether in the form of beef or farm-raised fish, now depends on grain and soybean meal for feed. Those desiring to maintain animal protein intake now compete with those trying to consume more grain directly.

While biological constraints are forcing discontinuities in agriculture and oceanic fisheries, atmospheric constraints — the mounting risks associated with pollution and global warming — are altering energy trends. On the broadest level, this will entail shifting investment from fossil fuels and nuclear power towards renewables — and towards greater energy efficiency in every human activity.

We cannot yet see the end of the fossil fuel age, but we can see the beginning of its decline. World oil production peaked in 1979. World coal production

dropped in 1990, in 1991 and again in 1992, interrupting a growth trend that had spanned two centuries. Of the three fossil fuels, only clean-burning natural gas is expanding output rapidly.

With oil, it was the higher price that initially arrested growth. More recently, the pall of automotive air pollution in cities like Los Angeles, Mexico City and Rome has slowed the once-unrestrained growth in motor vehicle use and, therefore, in oil use. With coal, it was neither supply nor price (the world has at least a few centuries of coal reserves left) but the effects of air pollution on human health, of acid rain on forests and crops and of rising carbon dioxide concentrations on the earth's climate that have sent the industry into decline.

What then will power the future world economy? Fifteen years ago, many would have said that nuclear power will. But the problems of waste disposal and safety have proved expensive and intractable and nuclear power is being challenged on economic grounds in most of the countries where it is produced.

Even as the nuclear and fossil fuel industries have faltered, three new technologies that harness energy directly or indirectly from the sun to produce electricity — solar thermal power plants, photovoltaic cells and wind generators — are surging. In wind power, particularly, breakthroughs in turbine technology are setting the stage for rapid expansion in the years ahead.

The potential for wind power far exceeds that of hydropower, which currently supplies one-fifth of world electricity. England and Scotland alone have enough wind potential to satisfy half of Europe's electricity needs. Two U.S. states — North Dakota and South Dakota — have enough wind to satisfy easily the whole country's electricity needs. And wind resource assessments by Peking have documented enough wind potential to raise China's electricity supply three-fold.

For Third World villages not yet connected to a grid, photovoltaic arrays are a more practical source. With the World Bank beginning to support this technology, costs will fall fast, making photovoltaic cells even more competitive. Over the longer term, cheap solar electricity in various forms will permit conversion of electricity into hydrogen,

offering an efficient means of energy transportation and storage.

With constraints emerging on primary economic sectors such as grain, fish and livestock production, as well as scarcities of fresh water, we may be moving into an era of slower economic growth overall. World economic growth reached its historical high at 5.2 per cent per year during the '60s, slowed to 3.4 per cent in the '70s, and 2.9 per cent in the '80s. Despite this slowdown, per capita output of goods and services rose as overall economic growth stayed ahead of population.

Now that too may be reversing. From 1990 to 1992, the world economy expanded at 0.6 per

cent per year. Living standards are falling.

The conventional economic wisdom concerning the recession of the early '90s attributes it to economic mismanagement in the advanced industrial countries (particularly the United States, Germany and Japan) and to the disruption associated with economic reform in the centrally planned economies. These are obviously the dominant forces slowing world economic growth, but they are not the only ones. The once-popular question of "growth or no growth" now seems largely irrelevant. A more fundamental question is how to satisfy the basic needs of the world's people without further

disrupting the economy's support systems and jeopardising the prospects of future generations.

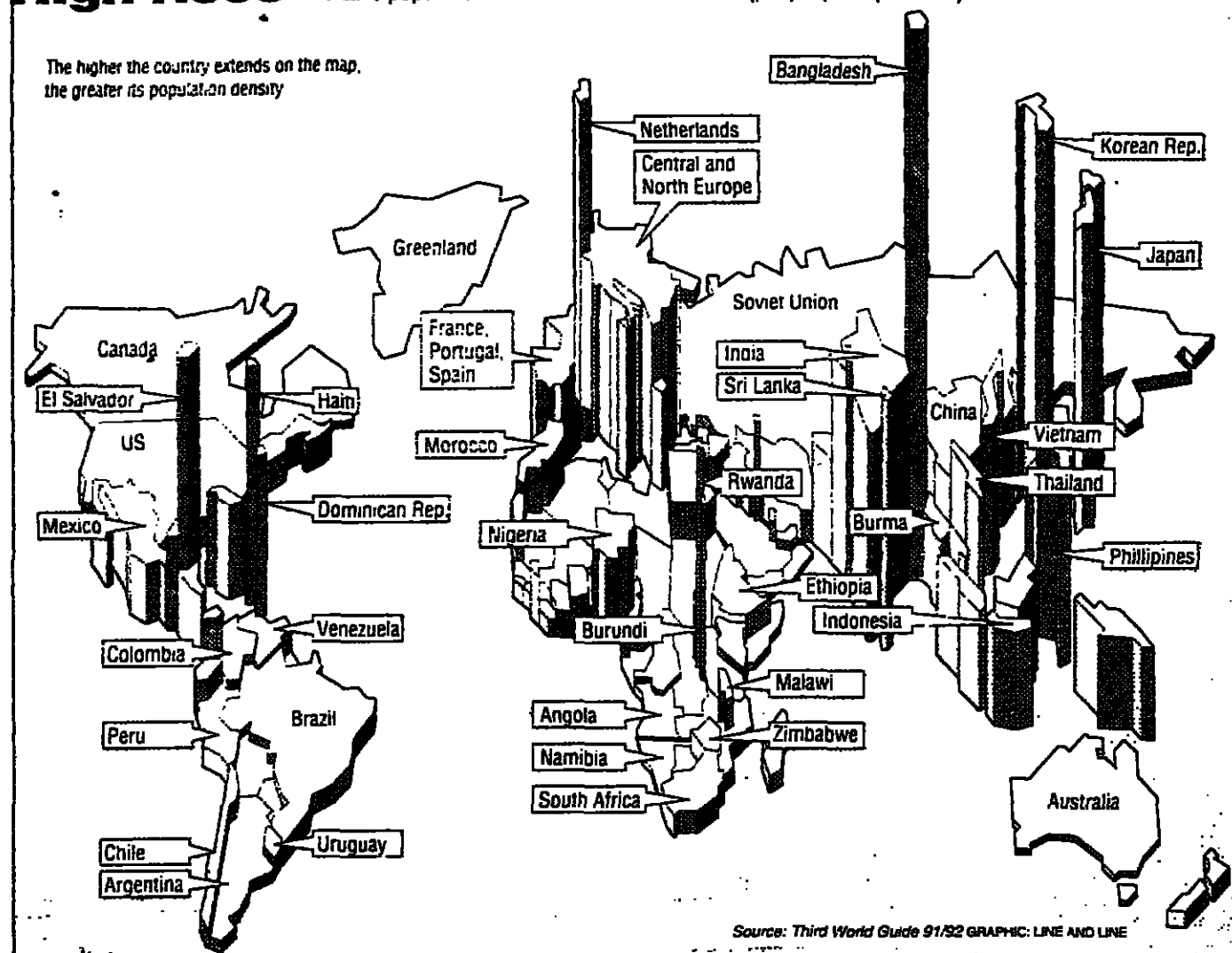
Of all the discontinuities that have become apparent in the past few years, however, the upward shift in the population growth trend may be most disturbing. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, declining fertility held out hope for braking population growth before it began to undermine living standards. The 1980s, however, turned out to be a lost decade, one in which the United States now only abdicated its leadership role, but also withdrew financial support from the U.N. Population Fund and the International Planned Parenthood Federation. This deprived

millions of couples in the Third World of access to the family planning services.

That population growth could undermine living standards has now become a matter of deepening concern. In early 1992, the U.S. National Academy of Sciences and the Royal Society of London together issued a report soberly warning that "If current predictions of population growth prove accurate and patterns of human activity on the planet remain unchanged, science and technology may not be able to prevent either irreversible degradation of the environment or continued poverty for much of the world" — The Washington Post.

High rises

Relative population densities around the world (people per square km)



British government road plans collide with environment

By Robert Woodward
Reuters

WINCHESTER, England — Where there was once a British beauty spot, there is now a gaping gash in the hillside, barbed wire and a 24-hour security guard on workers building a six-lane highway.

Twyford Down is the site of a head-on collision between environmentalists and the British government over its huge road building programme.

Several people were imprisoned in July for invading the site and machinery is regularly vandalised.

A "tribe" of environmentalists set up camp on the Downs, a collection of ancient trackways officially listed for their archaeological and natural interest. The protesters were forcibly removed in December and much of the Downs, home to rare species of orchid and butterfly, have since been destroyed.

Building contractors have now almost finished carving a one-kilometre long, 120-metre wide trench through the one-wooden hill outside the cathedral town of Winchester.

When the project is finished early next year Twyford Down will be the last link of a motorway stretching from London to the south coast city of Southampton.

"If they get away with this it will give them carte blanche for the whole of England," said Becky Lush, who spent two weeks in prison last month for trespass.

"It is the most protected landscape in the south and still they can drive a road through it," she said. Security men with video cameras watched her every move as she peered over the wire fence surrounding the site.

Even Lush concedes the battle for Twyford Down is now lost. But protesters believe their fight was not in vain and it could stop further desecration of the countryside.

"There is no one in the environmental movement who does not believe Twyford Down was a sacrifice worth making as it has woken up

"middle England" to what is happening," says Jai Redman of Twyford Down Alert. "The government wants us all to worship the same God — the motor car."

The Conservative government has pledged 24 billion pounds (\$36 billion) until 1999 for by-passes, motorways and other improvements. It believes these will improve industry's efficiency, make travelling easier and improve the living standards of people in towns throttled by traffic.

But many Britons believe Transport Secretary John MacGregor should be looking at ways of cutting traffic, not helping it.

At present there are 25 million vehicles for Britain's 56 million population and the government says road traffic could double by 2025. In most cities parking is a major headache and pollution from traffic often builds to dangerous levels.

Problems associated with cars are most grave in the south of England. Within 50 kilometres of London there are few places where you cannot hear the throb of traffic. Car ownership in London is expected to increase 50 per cent in the next 20 years.

Opposition politicians accuse the government of having a one-track policy and ignoring the benefits of public transport.

Less than five per cent of heavy freight is carried on Britain's railways and the government's plan to privatise the rail network is widely expected to lead to higher fares and less services, increasing the pressure on the road system.

"There should be a fundamental review of the road programme to encourage people to transfer to public transport," says John Prescott, transport spokesman for the main opposition Labour Party.

"This is the only way to deal with congestion and environmental problems."

Until the last two years, the

main brake on the government's road plans was tight spending limits imposed by the treasury.

Now there are clear signs that public anger is growing, particularly among traditional Conservative voters in the countryside. Much of that disquiet has been triggered by events at Twyford Down.

"Many only realise now how far it's gone. We were screaming but no one was listening," said Mr. Jai as he watched diggers crunch through the chalk deep inside the cutting. "Now they've seen what has happened and they are getting active before it happens to them."

Last month Mr. MacGregor was forced to drop plans to drive a trunk road through Oxleas Wood, an 8,000-year-old forest in south-east London, after widespread protests.

Environmental organisations have combined forces to fight the threat from roads and they are being led by small radical groups. Non-violent direct action is becoming the norm, even among the law-abiding middle classes, they say.

"Twyford Down and Oxleas Wood have given incredible strength of spirit to ordinary people," said a spokesman for a London pressure group. "It's given them power and a real feeling that the time is right to act."

Pressure groups see government plans to widen sections of the M25 orbital motorway around London to 14 lanes, making it the biggest road outside the United States, as the next flashpoint.

The widening will affect hard-core Conservative voters in wealthy suburbs west of London. Opposition to the scheme is loud and transcends political boundaries.

"Short of declaring martial law it is difficult to know what they (the government) can do," said Jonathan Bray of the anti-road co-ordinating group Alarm UK.

Yugoslavs adjust to living in poverty

By Natela Cutter
Reuters

BELGRADE — "I have enough coffee for the next five days and then I guess I just won't drink coffee any more," said pensioner Mirjana Pavlovic, queuing outside a Belgrade bank where she was trying to withdraw the little she had left in her account.

"I haven't bought meat since last month when prices skyrocketed, and coffee is out of the question," said 60-year-old Pavlovic.

Amid economic chaos and hyperinflation, some 97 per cent of the population of rump Yugoslavia lives below the poverty level. The standard of living has plummeted to subsistence levels since last year, according to government statistics.

Ms. Pavlovic's monthly income amounted to less than \$6 exchanged at the black market rate — enough to buy a kilo of coffee or three bottles of aspirin.

Struck by galloping inflation rooted in sanctions imposed for Yugoslavia's role in the war in Bosnia, the cash-strapped Central Bank has been unable to issue people with either their monthly salaries or their savings.

"I came to the bank to see if I could withdraw my money before inflation consumes it, but the bank has no cash and I have no

money to spend," said Ms. Pavlovic, almost in tears as she stood in front of Savija Bank alongside many long-faced, disgruntled people.

Ms. Pavlovic is one of the 1.2 million pensioners in Serbia who have been pushed to the bottom of the social ladder by a daily one-per cent hyperinflation and prices that jump twice a day, some by more than 200 per cent.

She, like many others, depends on relatives to help her out or simply on the bank's goodwill to turn a blind eye on her current account overdraft.

Banks, strapped for cash, issue cheques to depositors and have long since given up prosecuting those who are in the red.

"Millions are in the red. What we are dealing with here is a massive 'bouncing-of-cheques operation' that no one is ready to put a stop to in this desperate social climate," said a bank teller.

"It's an unofficial form of credit — our depositors."

Energy prices increased threefold last week, raising fears that many will not be able to heat their homes this winter.

Average citizens, depending only on their monthly salary, are forced to choose between buying a kilo of meat, a box of detergent or a month's supply of cigarettes.

Fist-fights frequently break out on the streets in front of cigarette

kiosks and policemen stand guard as new consignments arrive to prevent street vendors from hoarding to resell them at twice the price.

The value of the Yugoslav dinar tumbled against the dollar again last week, going from 100 million to 150 million dinars in the space of seven hours, black market dealers said.

The dinar was officially devalued for a fourth time this year, putting the dollar at 105 million dinars. Even now, hard currency brings double the amount on the black market.

The National Bank of Yugoslavia said it will chop six zeroes off the dinar currency within a month, while simultaneously issuing even larger banknotes in a feeble attempt to keep pace with the hyperinflation.

Belgrade black-market dealers, who are on every street corner, say the real culprits for economic disaster are the "big mafiosos" ranging from local police to underground chieftains.

"The big guys are the ones that really make a lot of money," said money dealer Mile, who plies his trade near one of Belgrade's largest vegetable markets, Kalenic Pijaca.

"I'm an engineer. I am forced to do this because I have two children to feed," said Mile sadly. He said he used to be paid \$1,500

a month but now receives only \$12 a month for his official work.

"I earn anywhere between \$30 and \$70 a day by buying and selling currencies," he said. Local people are keen to convert their dinars into hard currency as quickly as possible.

"It's no use keeping dinars in your pocket," said one local taxi driver. "If I want to hold on to my money I have to convert dinars into hard currency after every shift," he said.

The government announced last January that it would declare war on speculators to help prop up an economy crippled by sanctions and the war. But local police only recently began a half-hearted crackdown on black market dealers, arresting 457 in just one swoop last month.

Mile complained that only small-time dealers were being taken into custody while "those who really counted were untouchable."

Just a few blocks away from where Mile and his colleagues were standing, police started clearing the streets of money and cigarette vendors, many of them refugees from Bosnia.

"We can really only take their goods and money away from them but we can't keep them in custody," said Rocky, a young police officer, shrugging his shoulders.

He explained that the government had not made any new laws to cope with street vendors and currency dealers.

"It's just a vicious circle," he concluded.



A young Bosnian boy takes a swallow of water one day water is resumed to Sarajevo. The situation is not unfamiliar to any of the towns and villages of the war-torn, rump Yugoslavia (AFP photo)

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Japan bombarded with weak economic data and discouraging company results

TOKYO (AFP) — Japan was bombarded Tuesday with an array of weak economic data and corporate profit declines, reflecting the adverse impact of the yen's appreciation and slumping sales in almost all major markets except Asia.

The most discouraging news came from the Economic Planning Agency, which revised its assessment of the Japanese economy downward last week amid growing signs that the country is heading towards a double dip recession.

The agency said Tuesday its leading index of economic indicators remained below the crucial boom-or-bust line of 50 points in June for the second month in a row, falling from a revised 41.7 points in May to a mere 36.4 per cent.

The index measures 13 areas of economic activity, indicating the outlook in the coming six months. Fifty points is considered the dividing line between future expansion or contraction in overall activity.

"We don't consider that the economy will continue to deteriorate," an agency official said. "But we can't expect a rapid recovery."

Negative factors in June included commodity prices, employment, machinery orders, inventories of finished goods, housing starts, shipments of durable goods and corporate profits, the agency said.

Among other discouraging announcements Tuesday:

- The Japan chain store association said sales at supermarkets in July fell 2.6 per cent from a year earlier to 1,370 billion yen (\$13 billion), marking 11 months of uninterrupted declines.
- Sales of food rose 1.2 per cent, but clothing sales fell 8.3 per cent and overall sales are not expected to improve in August which was marred by continued cool weather.
- The international trade and industry ministry said industrial output in the three months to June shrank 1.5 per cent from the previous quarter with shipments falling 2.7 per cent.
- Inventories declined only 0.7 per cent and continuing adjustment may depress production further in the current quarter.
- Matsushita Electric Industrial Co. Ltd. said group pretax earnings fell seven per cent to 33.7 billion yen in the three months to June with sales down

seven per cent to 1,596 billion yen.

"The high yen, low demand for audio-visual products and the negative impact of Japan's cool summer on air conditioner sales all contributed," the world's biggest consumer electronics manufacturer said.

Honda Motor Co. Ltd. said group pretax profit plunged 55 per cent to 15.3 billion yen in the same period, with sales falling 17 per cent to 920 billion yen.

"Although overall sales volume in Asia excluding Japan showed a steady increase, a decline in sales of automobiles in Japan, North America and Europe, as well as the strong impact of the higher yen, negatively affected revenue," the third-biggest Japanese carmaker said.

TDK Corp. said worldwide profits before tax plunged 42 per cent to 6.4 billion yen in the same three months with sales falling 9.6 per cent to 121 billion yen.

The world's largest maker of magnetic tapes said the declines reflected the yen's surge and a slump in demand for video and cassette tapes.

Moody Investors Services Inc. placed the long-term credit

rating of Sony Corp. under review for possible downgrading, citing downward pressure on the Japanese electronics giant's profits and cash flow.

Finance Minister Hiroshisa Fuji's disclosure Tuesday that the Japanese government implemented 56 per cent of this year's public works projects in the first quarter, the highest ratio since 1966, was meanwhile greeted cautiously.

"These funds are simply not being injected into the economy quickly enough to have much positive effect," said Kenneth Courtis, senior economist at Deutsche Bank Capital Markets (Asia).

He blamed the "cascade of political scandals" in Japan and the "pervasive reluctance on the part of local authorities to engage in much new spending for fear — rightly or wrongly — of being drawn into a web of suspicion."

"Japan is caught in the tightening grip of a vicious deflationary vice," Mr. Courtis said, noting that spending delays had combined with the cool summer and the strong yen to push the economy back into recession in the current quarter following a relatively strong performance.

Budget crisis weakens Australian government

CANBERRA (R) — Prime Minister Paul Keating's ability to push his budget past opposition parties in parliament weakened Tuesday with the publication of an opinion poll showing a collapse in government popularity.

With only 31 per cent support Mr. Keating's government is now less popular than any administration since the Labour Party gained power in 1983, the newpoll in The Australian newspaper said.

Newspoll said the budget had prompted the greatest slump in government popularity — 10 percentage points in two weeks — it had ever recorded.

Analysts said Mr. Keating was now in no position to threaten hostile parties in the senate, the upper house of parliament.

"I don't think the government can now force the budget through in an untouched form," Elaine Thompson, a political analyst with the University of New South Wales, said.

Instead Mr. Keating will have to negotiate with the 10 middle-ground senators — Australian Democrats, greens and an independent — who hold the balance of power in the senate.

The minor parties have demanded changes to the budget, which raised almost every indirect tax as part of a plan to reduce the deficit from 16 billion Australian dollars (\$10.7 billion) in 1993/94 to below 6 billion Australian dollars (\$4 billion) in 1996/97.

Health Minister Graham Richardson said Tuesday there was a pretty good chance the government would call an election to resolve the issue.

The government would probably not accept senate amendments to the budget bills, he said.

But analysts said it was difficult to see the government risking an election under the circumstances, the newpoll showed the official opposition party, the Liberal-Nationals, with 54 per cent support, 23 percentage point ahead of the government.

Other ministers steered clear of election talk but Treasurer John Dawkins, who announced the budget on Aug. 17, stood by his warning that the budget's key elements were non-negotiable.

"We can't see the bits fall off," Mr. Dawkins told reporters in Sydney. "We didn't put this paper up as a negotiating package."

"I think it would be a very sad day for Australia if we got into the sort of situation that we are in, in the United States where the executive government is unable to secure the passage of its legislation through the parliament," Mr. Dawkins said.

Australian budgets normally pass through parliament without dissent, with opposition parties in the senate recognising government's right to govern through its house of representatives majority.

The government's constitutional remedy to senate obstruction is to force both houses of parliament to an election.

The Australian dollar fell almost one U.S. cent to US 0.6650 in New York trading Monday as foreign exchange markets reacted to the crisis.

Campaign barely curbs China state industry losses

PEKING (Agencies) — A nearly two-year-old campaign to restructure China's loss-making state enterprises has managed to cut industrial red ink by only 3.6 per cent, the official Xinhua News Agency reported.

Disappointed by the poor results, Peking has resorted to an old-fashioned cure — Stalinist-style loss-reduction by decree.

The State Economic and Trade Commission and the ministry of finance decreed at a national meeting that losses by state-owned enterprises must fall 20 per cent by the end of 1993 and the number of loss-making firms trimmed by five per cent in the same period, Xinhua said late Monday.

Commission Vice-Minister Shi Wanping said the restructuring begun in late 1991 had, by the end of 1992, yielded only a 3.6 per cent reduction in red ink, at the state enterprises and a 4.2 per cent drop in their overall number.

The restructuring called for grafting useful operations and workers from major loss-making enterprises on to flourishing but labour-short market-oriented firms.

Plants that could not be salvaged were to be closed and their workers furloughed at half pay.

Analysts say state industry's perennial losses — projected optimistically at \$4.4 billion yuan (\$14.8 billion) this year — pose a threat to China's economic growth, which sizzled at a year-on-year 14 per cent rate in the first half of 1993.

They say Peking's printing of money to finance huge industrial

subsidies is a key contributor to China's inflationary spiral.

Peking has floated numerous ideas for prodding loss-makers into fiscal health, vowing to make some responsible for profits and losses by year's end.

Mr. Shi said new plans were afoot to curb losses in the petroleum, coal and defence industries through unspecified reforms.

But there is virtually no chance that state-owned industry will be allowed to die on the altar of market forces.

Accounting officially for 55 per cent of China's industrial production, including the entire energy and transport sectors, state industry is a cornerstone of Communist Party authority.

A vice minister of finance, Li Yanling, told the conference that loss reduction can be achieved only by "deepening the reform and transforming enterprises' operational mechanism" — code word for a go-slow policy on the shift to market economics.

Recent increases in state-set coal and petroleum prices, though inflationary, have helped reduce losses in those key industries, both of which are owned by the government.

An official in the oil sector said that China will lay off some 500,000 workers in the oil and natural gas sector by 1995 as part of a broad restructuring as the country shifts to a market economy.

The plan also includes far-reaching price reforms to create a unified system in line with the world market within three years.

Balladur tells ministers to close ranks

PARIS (R) — France's conservative government, buffeted by recession and a run on the franc since taking office just four months ago, met for six hours Monday to draw up its strategy for the country's economic crisis.

Prime Minister Edouard Balladur called on his ministers to close ranks in fighting unemployment, described by government spokesman Nicolas Sarkozy as the premier's biggest worry.

"All our work must go towards solving this problem," Mr. Sarkozy, who is also budget minister, told reporters.

But apart from a slight easing of income tax, Mr. Balladur is not expected to change significantly policies which have made the fight against inflation and defence of the franc priorities.

The meeting was the first since the virtual collapse of the European Community's exchange rate mechanism (ERM) on Aug. 2 and came amid calls for France to take advantage of the effective float of the franc to slash interest rates and boost economic growth.

In an increasingly venomous campaign, government critics have published a series of anonymous letters demanding a change of course to tackle recession and unemployment at 11.6 per cent.

In the latest, a group writing in the monthly Revue des Deux Mondes described "the tragedy of the strong franc" which it said could only be alleviated by sharply lowering interest rates and breaking the link between the franc and the mark.

They also condemned the strong-arm tactics of the treasury and Bank of France who they said were stifling economic debate.

The letter was signed "Galileo," after the 17th century philosopher forced to recant his "heretical" views and admit that the sun really did revolve round the earth.

The premier told ministers the government and majority must not be riven by dissent, Mr. Sarkozy said.

"The country's troubles are serious enough to that the government must set an example of unity, solidarity and teamwork," he said.

Mr. Balladur, still the most popular premier since World War II, has however seemed immune both to such criticism and to the ERM debacle over which his government has presided.

Unemployment is officially forecast to hit 12.5 per cent by the end of the year as France's high real interest rates dig it deeper

into slump.

Germany, its main trading partner and ally, has too many problems of its own to be much help, while at home angry farmers are once again threatening to blockade Paris next month.

Moreover, the virtual collapse of the ERM has left a huge hole in the dream of European Union which has been the centerpiece of French foreign policy for almost a decade.

In response, Mr. Balladur has relied on fine-tuning the economy rather than give it a radical overhaul.

Last week his government announced a five-year plan to loosen up working conditions and cut payroll taxes while leaving intact the key planks of France's employment laws.

This week, he is to tackle the byzantine tax system.

Newspapers said the government may cut income tax by two per cent from 1994 — essentially for the middle classes — in an attempt to encourage consumer spending.

But in a country where income tax is low and only one household in two even pays it, the impact would be limited.

Financial daily Les Echos said the tax changes, which will also

reduce the number of tax bands, would cost the state just six billion to 10 billion francs (\$1 billion to \$1.7 billion) — a fraction of overall spending.

Apart from that, Mr. Balladur is expected to reaffirm his aim of sticking to a cautious monetary policy, slowly lowering interest rates rather than cutting them steeply in a dash for growth.

On Monday the Bank of France lowered its 24-hour rate by half a percentage point to 7.75 per cent, the fifth small cut since the ERM crisis.

The cautious approach on rates appears to underline the authorities' determination to keep the franc's link to the mark and keep up progress towards economic and monetary union (EMU).

Signs of whether France will be rewarded for that effort may emerge Thursday when Mr. Balladur flies to Bonn for talks with German Chancellor Helmut Kohl.

The Bundesbank council, which still holds the key to lower interest rates across Europe, meets in Frankfurt that day.

A German rate cut could comfort Mr. Balladur in his calm assurance that the franc-mark link can be kept alive.

Economists say German central bank likely to cut discount rate half a point tomorrow

FRANKFURT (AFP) — The majority of German economists are convinced that the Bundesbank will cut its discount rate by half a point at the Thursday meeting of its policy-making central council, or at the latest at the following meeting, to make it easier to handle monetary policy.

But it is primarily "technical factors" that are pushing the German central bank into reducing that key interest rate, the experts say. The point is that since the bank has reduced its securities repurchase ("repo") rate the last few weeks to 6.8 per cent against almost 7.3 per cent in mid-July, it no longer has enough room for maneuver in daily management.

By maintaining its discount rate at 6.75 per cent at its July 29

meeting, the Bundesbank aggravated the wave of speculation shaking the European monetary system (EMS), which was to lead, on Aug. 2, to a drastic widening of the permitted fluctuation bands within the exchange rate mechanism. Since then, the mark has appreciated only moderately against the other European currencies.

Since the other EC countries now have more elbow-room in adapting their monetary policies to their specific economic situation thanks to the widening of the bands to 15 per cent on either side of the central values, there is now considerably less pressure on the Bundesbank to chop rates sharply, economists note.

As the Bundesbank central council meets Thursday in Frank-

furt, Chancellor Helmut Kohl will be welcoming French Prime Minister Edouard Balladur in Bonn. But Commerzbank economist Peter Pietsch says "there is no longer any real (French) political pressure" on the Bundesbank, but at most a French "wish" to see the German interest rates lowered.

Analysts are divided in their interpretation of recent statements by Bundesbank officials. In its August report, the bank acknowledged that, like other European central banks, it had more room for maneuver after the Aug. 2 decision to widen the EMS bands — but it added that the margin be "used with caution."

Last Friday, Bundesbank President Helmut Schlesinger warned

against market disorders that might be caused by "excessive expectations" about a reduction of the Bundesbank's key interest rates.

He was aiming his remark at Deutsche Bank — but all the same, Deutsche Bank research economist Rainer Veit said chances of a cut in the discount rate this Thursday are better than 50/50.

Over the weekend, Bundesbank Vice-President Hans Tietmeyer said in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, that a continued gradual lowering of interest rates would be possible if permitted by money supply and inflation trends. BHF economist Hermann Rempersperger commented that with those conditions, "that assertion is always true."

Kyrgyzstan unveils tough budget measures

TASHKENT, Uzbekistan (R) — The former Soviet republic of Kyrgyzstan, a major recipient of Western aid, announced stringent 1993 budgetary controls Tuesday to drag the country out of a deepening economic mess.

The package, carried in the official Slovo Kyrgyzstana newspaper, outlines state lending to state-owned industry and orders widespread redundancies in government ministries, a local journalist said by telephone.

It also demands that all branches of industry except agriculture, energy and bread production pay five per cent of their sales revenues into a newly established social protection fund. The payments are retroactive from Aug. 15.

"It is a very stringent package of measures," said a foreign diplomat, speaking by telephone from the Kyrgyz capital Bishkek.

"It remains to be seen whether companies and the people in general can accept such harsh conditions."

Kyrgyzstan was the first among four Central Asian states to push through an ambitious reform programme to transform its Soviet-style economy. It was the first to dump the Soviet-era rouble and bring in its own currency, the som.

Now, by announcing plans to slim a bloated bureaucracy, it has apparently moved further along the reformist road than other former Soviet republics, where state jobs are still sacrosanct.

The reforms have already earned Kyrgyzstan plaudits from U.S. President Bill Clinton and promises of nearly \$500 million in international aid.

But for ordinary Kyrgyz, the changes have been painful.

The average wage slipped be-

low the poverty line in June, unemployment — officially nonexistent in Soviet days — has risen to 52,000 and industrial production fell by 25 per cent in the first half of 1993 from the same period of 1992.

Industrialists complained the introduction of the som made it hard to pay bills to Russia and other ex-Soviet states. Overall levels of indebtedness are high.

The new budget measures, described in a decree from Prime Minister Tursunbek Chenshyev, aim to avert a payments crisis. They forecast 1993 expenditure at 657 million som (\$111 million) and income at 497 million som (\$84 million).

Mr. Chenshyev's decree also says all money earned this year from the privatisation of state property should be funnelled into government coffers.

It calls for 10 per cent of

education ministry employees to be made redundant and demands unspecified staffing cuts at the agriculture, labour and health ministries.

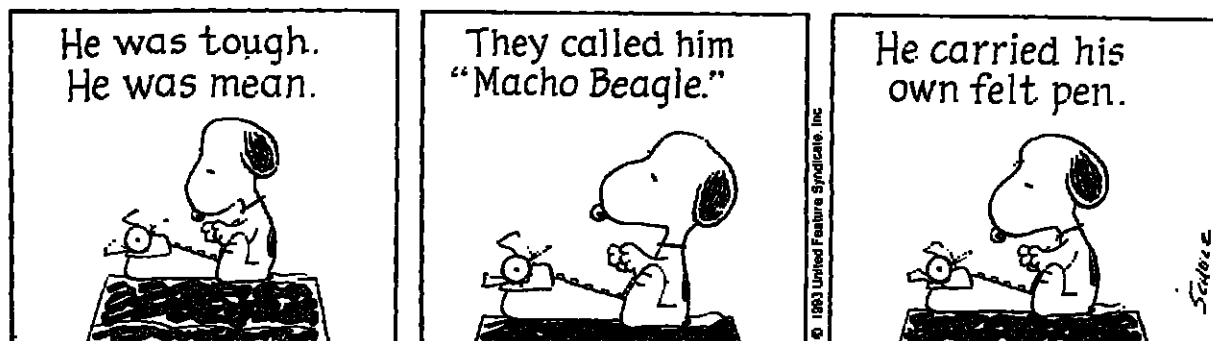
It did not say when these cuts would be made.

All exemptions from customs duties are to be abolished and more students will be asked to pay for their tuition.

U.S. economist Jeffrey Sachs, a Harvard professor who has also acted as adviser to other former communist states, told journalists he approved of reformist President Askar Akayev.

"Your republic is in a very difficult situation because your parliament is very conservative," he told a news conference. "For example it is trying to stop the privatisation of land. But your president is a wonderful person, with a good international image."

Peanuts



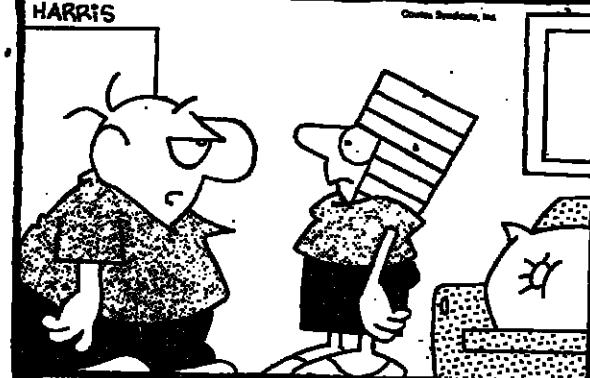
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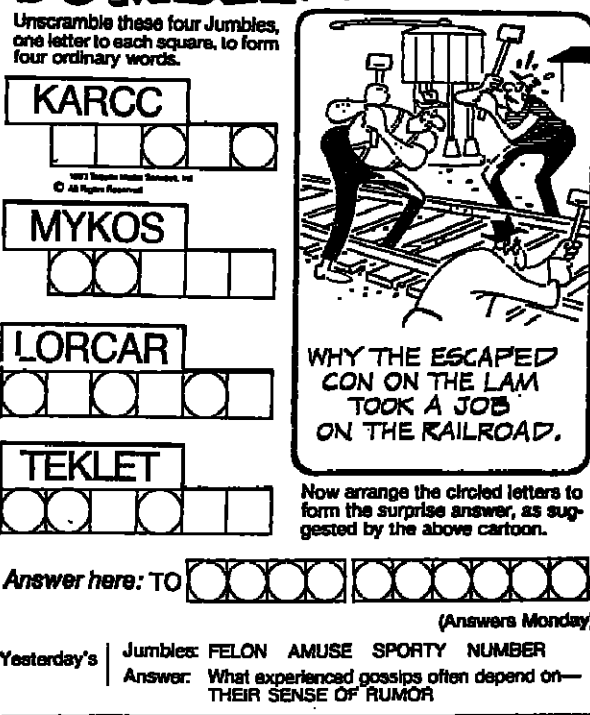
Mutt'n'Jeff



THE BETTER HALF

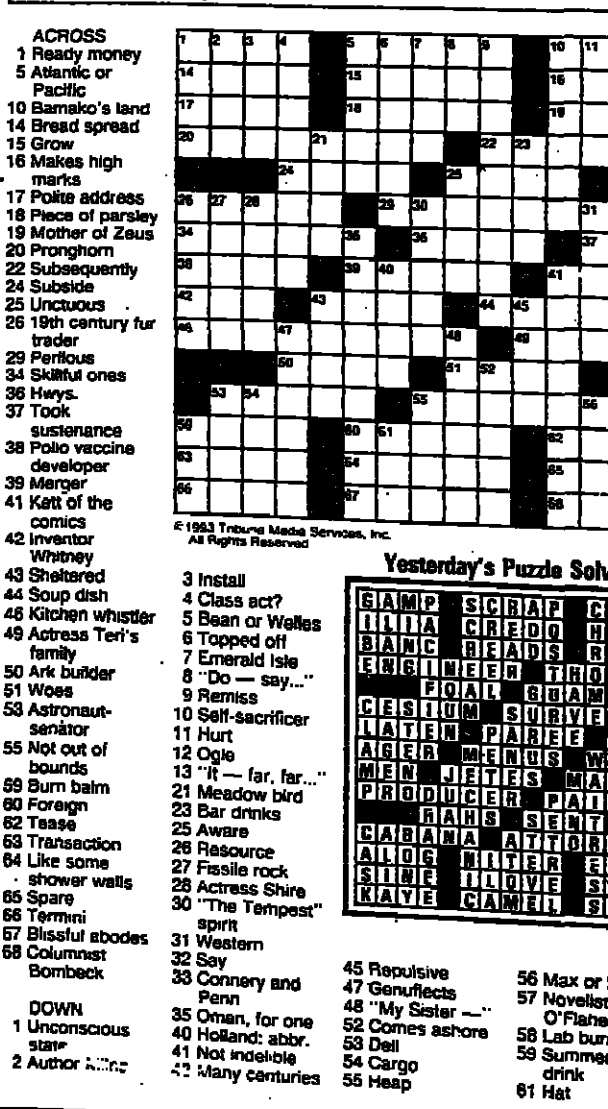


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S. African negotiators unveil 3rd draft constitution

JOHANNESBURG (Agencies) — Legal experts Tuesday submitted a third draft of South Africa's future constitution to democracy negotiators, proposing the creation of a post of vice-president to be held by a person from a political party other than that of the president.

The president and vice-president will thus "lay a unifying role at a time when national reconciliation is likely to be a high priority," the draft said.

It suggested that the two, once elected, withdraw from parliamentary politics to help advance reconciliation, leaving day-to-day business to a prime minister chosen from the president's party.

With the president elected from the majority party and the vice-president from the opposition, "the vice-president will act for the president during his or her absence, but will not necessarily succeed to the office of president if it should become vacant," the draft said.

It said the president should be elected by the National Assembly within 15 days of South Africa's first non-racial election, set for April 27.

The latest draft avoids the thorny issue of federalism, leaving it up to a special committee set up after the first and second drafts drew fierce criticism from the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and right-wing groups that fear they will be swamped by an African National Congress majority.

The drafts submitted so far are for a temporary basic law to be debated and ratified at the democracy forum before being rewritten — save for immutable constitutional principles — by a Constitutional Making Body (CMB) to emerge from the April 27 poll.

Top government negotiator Roelf Meyer told the South African Press Association (SAPA) Tuesday that a final draft should be ready for ratification at a special session of parliament in October.

IFP leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi has rejected the first two drafts out of hand and is against the very notion of a CMB, demanding instead that a panel of experts draw up a definitive constitution on the basis of suggestions by democracy negotiators.

The IFP and the white right-wing Conservative Party abandoned talks on July 2 in protest over the setting of the election date.

Meanwhile four people were killed, one a four-year-old child, in clashes between troops and residents in Phola Park squatter camp near Johannesburg early Tuesday, witnesses and the African National Congress said.

The South African Defence Force said it knew of only two victims: Gunmen killed after attacking an army patrol.

A Phola Park resident told Reuters the African-speaking soldiers, dressed in long jackets and balacavas, fired volleys of shots at shacks in the camp, killing the sleeping child.

Three other people were killed in separate incidents in the camp between midnight and 2 a.m., residents said.

Defence Force spokesman Major Andreas Jordaan told Reuters an army patrol returned fire after being ambushed by a group of gunmen.

"I cannot comment on reports of four people being killed. What I can confirm is that an army patrol shot and killed two men after the patrol came under fire. Two AK-47 assault rifles were recovered," said Maj. Jordaan.

He said no soldiers were wounded in the gunbattle.

ANC Phola Park executive member Doctor Nkanyana told reporters police were responsible for the killing but police spokesman Captain Wilkes Weber denied his men had been involved in any operations in Phola Park during the night.

More than 900 people have been killed in political violence sweeping South Africa since multi-party negotiators last month set April 27 as the date for the first all-race elections.

Nearly half of the victims died in Johannesburg's satellite townships.

In a separate development, South African President F.W. de Klerk said South Africa's political leaders must work to uproot violence in the country ahead of its first multi-racial elections.

Mr. de Klerk, who is due to visit Chile, Paraguay and Argentina on a Latin American tour later this week, spoke at a joint news conference with Uruguayan President Luis Lacalle in Montevideo.

"There are no simple solutions for South Africa's situation," said the white-minority government leader, who has been criticised by the African National Congress for travelling abroad in South Africa's name.

Cambodia's Royalist Party calls for restoration of monarchy

PHNOM PENH (Agencies) — The Royalist FUNCINPEC Party released a statement Tuesday rejecting the country's new constitution and calling for the restoration of the Cambodian monarchy.

The statement means a possible deadlock in the Constituent Assembly when it meets to ratify the document on Sept. 10, because FUNCINPEC controls 58 seats of the 120 in the assembly and a two-thirds majority — or 80 seats — is needed to ratify it.

"History has shown that Cambodia's political stability depends upon Buddhist tenants and the king. The king is the basis of stability," the statement said.

The daily Rasmey Kampuchea (Light of Cambodia) reported that two drafts of the constitution will be presented to the assembly, one drafted by FUNCINPEC and based on Cambodia's 1947 constitution and the other drafted by a committee made up of members from FUNCINPEC and the formerly communist Cambodian People's Party (CPP).

Unless changes are made to the draft, however, it has no chance of being ratified.

The constitution drafted by the committee and finished on Aug. 17 is still being fine tuned, the report said. But it has been criticised by the U.N. Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) for being vague and lacking specific references to the rights of ethnic minorities, especially ethnic Vietnamese Cambodians.

The draft outlines a parliamentary system where the head of state — sure to be Prince Norodom Sihanouk — is elected first by the assembly for a five-year term renewable by general election.

It says the head of state has the power to appoint the prime minister, who is most likely to be his son Prince Norodom Ranariddh, currently head of FUNCINPEC and a co-premier sharing power with Mr. Hun Sen.

But in the FUNCINPEC statement, Prince Ranariddh said that constituent members of the FUNCINPEC Party decided together to ask for the adoption of a constitutional monarchy.

"Cambodia needs to have a head of state who does not have his own political party, meaning a king. The king is the cement who can connect all the broken parts and build a bridge to connect one party with another party," it said.

The Rasmey Kampuchea quoted Chem Snguon, one of the senior members of the drafting committee from the CPP, as saying the two versions would be put before the assembly for the decision, but that neither was sufficient.

"I am afraid our draft constitution is insufficient," the report quoted Mr. Chem Snguon as saying. "Neither constitution is good or bad, but if they (the assembly) decide to use the old one, it would not be good either because we have to change some parts to improve it."

Prince Ranariddh is due to travel to Pyongyang at the end of the month to present a draft of the constitution to his father before the assembly meets to ratify it on Sept. 10.

It is now unclear which one he will present, or if he will bring both.

Meanwhile, Prince Ranariddh and Mr. Hun Sen, held talks Tuesday with Vietnamese President Le Duc Anh on the second day of an official visit to Hanoi.

Details of the 45-minute meeting with Mr. Anh — who commanded the Vietnamese forces which invaded Cambodia in December 1978 — were not known.

In talks with Prime Minister Vo Van Kiet Monday, they discussed the main outstanding issues — problems along the border and the future of more than 100,000 ethnic Vietnamese long-term residents of Cambodia.

In brief comments after the talks, Mr. Kiet said they had agreed the wish of ethnic Vietnamese to live in Cambodia should be respected. A communiqué is expected Wednesday.

Hanoi is angry over repeated attacks by Khmer Rouge guerrillas against the Vietnamese, over 100 of whom have been killed in the past year.

Some 30,000 fled Cambodia before the elections, and some are waiting on the border for Phnom Penh's permission to return.



Philippine movie actress and candidate for Miss World pageant Ruffa Gutierrez fights her tears during a Senate inquiry on 'Brunei beauties' (AFP photo)

Philippine Miss World bet denies prostitution

MANILA (AP) — The Philippine entry in the Miss World pageant wept "I am not a prostitute" at a Senate hearing Tuesday into charges that some of the country's best-known entertainers go to Brunei as call girls.

Ruffa Gutierrez, 19, said the allegation may jeopardise her chances of winning the Miss World title.

Sen. Ernesto Maceda, citing newspaper reports, asked the Senate to investigate rumours that Filipino women actresses, models and singers visit the oil-rich South East Asian sultanate for prostitution under the guise of entertainment.

While acknowledging he had no proof, Sen. Maceda named Miss Gutierrez, an actress, and several other prominent Filipino entertainers — dubbed the "Brunei beauties" by the Manila media.

"As a youth, I am shocked that a member of the Senate could so recklessly implicate me in a baseless, malicious accusation based upon gossip, verbal or printed, that has caused me and my family deep anxiety and sleepless nights," Miss Gutierrez said on the opening day of the hearings.

She denied having ever visited Brunei and insisted "I am not a prostitute." She demanded a public apology.

Sen. Maceda said his staff was still verifying reports from Brunei and would apologise later if no evidence of the alleged prostitution could be found.

"It seems that by filing this resolution, I am on trial here as much as everyone else," said Sen. Maceda. He said the issue deserved Senate attention because the rumours defamed the country's reputation.

Danes raise German U-boat

COPENHAGEN (R) — A German U-boat sunk in the dying days of World War II broke the surface for the first time in 48 years early Monday after a successful all-night salvage operation in Danish waters. A Danish-Dutch consortium brought the U-534, rumoured to be carrying Nazi treasures or secrets, to the surface at 0845 GMT 20 kilometres north of the Danish island of Anholt. "The U-534 is in fantastic shape," Jonathan Wardlow, spokesman for the salvors, told Reuters. "Much better than we ever could have expected." "We have now got all the U-boat's hatches open and are using bilge pumps to get the water out of the vessels," he said. "Water rushes into the vessel almost as quickly as we can pump it out which could mean that we are near the place where the British depth charge hit and holed the submarine in the 1945 attack."

Eyeful of prizes for lucky tower visitor

PARIS (AFP) — The most visited French monument, the Eiffel Tower, is going to welcome its 150 millionth visitor in a few days, and he or she will get an eyeful of presents, including a car, the tower operator said Monday. The happy winner is expected some time between Aug. 28 and Sept. 2, depending on how the crowds run, said the new company for operation of the Eiffel Tower. The symbol of Paris welcomed its 25 millionth visitor in 1953, and the 100 millionth in 1983. The tower now pulls in about six million visitors a year, with a daily average of 5,000 to 8,000 in poor weather to as many as 30,000 on a nice summer day.

'Majorism' gets a mention in new Oxford dictionary

LONDON (AFP) — The term "majorism" has earned itself a place in the fourth edition of the prestigious smaller Oxford Dictionary — less than three years after its namesake came to power. The two-volume dictionary, due out next month, defines Majorism as "the political and economic policies of the British Conservative politician John Major who became prime minister in 1990." Mr. Major has the British press to thank for gaining the same access to posterity as his predecessor Margaret Thatcher who also features in the dictionary under "Thatcherism," according to Alan Hughes of the Oxford University Press. "We discovered that Majorism was being used in the press, and since established usage is the main criterion for inclusion of words, we put it in." Majorism will be among 4,000 new additions to the dictionary which like the awesome 20 volume larger version is the reference book for millions.

Airline to introduce 'smoking' cabins

PARIS (AFP) — Air France is to introduce separate smoking cabins on flights to Japan and South Korea from Oct. 28, it announced Tuesday. "The cabins in economy class at the back of the aircraft will be separated from non-smoking by galleys and curtains and will have seating for 90. The French national carrier said that it had decided to make the move because around 30 per cent of travellers on the service say they are smokers, against 13 per cent on average for other destinations.

Peace concert draws noise complaints

JOHANNESBURG (AP) — An anti-violence concert billed Music For Peace has drawn complaints about the noise it generated. About 40,000 people crammed into Johannesburg's Wanderers Stadium for the show, which included prayers, gospel singing and speeches by political leaders. African National Congress President Nelson Mandela was among those attending. But city officials said they had received scores of petitions and complaints about the noise. The stadium is in Illovo, a wealthy white neighbourhood north of downtown Johannesburg. The show was aimed at rallying efforts to bring peace to South Africa, where thousands of people have died in political violence in recent years.

Donkeys in drug bust

JOHANNESBURG (AP) — Police made a drug bust when they searched 11 donkeys and found them to be carrying bags of marijuana, officials said. The donkeys were being herded across the Lesotho-South African border when police discovered they were concealing 460 kilograms (1,012 pounds) of the drug. Two men were arrested and had to walk for a day with their captors before they could set out of the mountains.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Policeman hurt, bank bombed in Belfast

BELFAST (R) — Irish Republican gunmen Tuesday shot and wounded a policeman on checkpoint duty outside a West Belfast Police Station, police said. The Irish National Liberation Army, a small splinter group fighting just Britain from Northern Ireland, admitted responsibility for the shooting in a statement to the media. The policeman, who was shot in the leg by gunmen speeding by in a hijacked car, was reported "comfortable" in hospital. The Irish Republican Army (IRA), the main guerrilla group fighting Britain in the province, extensively damaged a Belfast bank in a bomb attack early Tuesday. Police described the IRA's eight-minute warning to security forces to clear the area as "woefully inadequate."

Defector cites unrest in N. Korea

SEOUL (AP) — A North Korean defector, describing growing unrest in the hardline communist state, said Tuesday 10 generals have been executed for a coup attempt, food shortages have worsened and a new dissident movement has been crushed. The defector, Im Young-Sun, 30, also said military colleagues reported hundreds of people killed in an accident while trying to hide a nuclear reactor from international inspectors. Underground nuclear tests were being conducted under a thick layer of lead at the communist state's nuclear complex at Yongbyon, 98 kilometres north of Pyongyang, Lt. Im said. None of Lt. Im's reports could be confirmed. North Korea is among the world's most closed and isolated nations, and information is tightly controlled. Im, who identified himself as a first lieutenant in the North Korean army, told a news conference the 10 generals were executed at the end of 1992 for plotting to overthrow Kim Il Sung, and his son and heir apparent as North Korean leader, Kim Jong Il.

Brazil restricts access to Indian reserve

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP) — The government has restricted access to the site where gold miners massed and 73 Yanomami Indians, barring foreign journalists and American and Canadian diplomats from the Amazon reservation. The government has been criticised worldwide for failing to protect the Stone Age tribe from miners, who have been prospecting in Yanomami territory illegally since 1987 despite government efforts to oust them. Diane Page, a human rights observer sent by U.S. embassy in Brasilia, and Canadian diplomat Alan Lattinippe were told to return after their plane touched down Monday at the remote Surucucu Air Force Base in the Yanomami reservation. The diplomats, which had received authorisation to visit the area from the government's National Indian Foundation, were ordered to return by federal police on grounds they had not received proper Foreign Ministry approval.

CIS agrees on air defences

MOSCOW (R) — Commonwealth states Tuesday signed an agreement that might salvage the remains of a once-unrivalled air defence system thrown into disarray by the collapse of the Soviet Union, ITAR-TASS News Agency reported. Defence ministers from Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) signed the deal outlining key areas of military cooperation and establishing joint anti-aircraft defence systems and early warning systems against missile attack. The former Soviet Air Defence umbrella depended on a system of monitoring stations throughout the 15 republics and a central control in Moscow. With the collapse of the union, Moscow lost effective control of stations in the three Baltic states and Transcaucasia. The emergency of installations in Central Asia has also been criticised by officials. The long failure of Commonwealth states to agree in practice on a joint air defence was symptomatic of the weakness of its military cooperation. The Commonwealth states, unable to agree on central issues of defence, recently abolished the Commonwealth Joint Command.

Ukrainians mark Independence Day

KIEV (R) — Ukraine marked the second anniversary of independence Tuesday with street festivals, but the country's citizens were increasingly angry at plunging living standards and an unending political crisis. Streets in the capital were decked out in traditional embroidered banners with slogans extolling Ukrainian statehood. Officials hoped that residents would brave steady rain to attend open-air concerts and sporting events. But most Ukrainians appeared at best indifferent to the celebrations marking the August 24, 1991 proclamation of independence from the Soviet Union. "Nothing has changed for the better in the past two years," said Serhiy Obarat, a policeman watching a cross-country race on Kiev's main thoroughfare, Kreshchatik Street. "Securing independence was important. But there is too much corruption in high places. Only a new president and parliament can change things."

Italy probes ex-communist treasurer

MILAN (R) — Italy's ex-Communists, until now relatively unscathed by the country's sweeping corruption scandal, on Tuesday became more deeply embroiled when the party's treasurer came under investigation. Marcello Stefanini was warned he was being investigated over alleged kickbacks paid by a building firm, Italian News Agency (ANSA) said. Stefanini, a senator in the upper house of parliament, is one of the most senior officials in the reform Communist (PDS) to be caught in the scandal over the illegal financing of political parties. More than 20 per cent of Italian members of parliament and four former prime ministers are under investigation in the 18-month-old probe, in which the once-dominant Socialists and Christian Democrats have been hardest hit.

Azeri leader says rebel chief fled; men deserted

BAKU (Agencies) — Azeri leader Heydar Aliyev, signalling the apparent end of a separatist rebellion in the south of his country, said Tuesday that the rebel chief had fled and his men were deserting.

In a television broadcast, Mr. Aliyev said three people had been killed and five wounded Monday when the rebels opened fire on demonstrators in the southern port of Lenkeran.

Rebel ex-army officer Aliakram Gummatov, whose men seized control of seven districts bordering Iran in June, had fled into the woods around Lenkeran, Mr. Aliyev said.

Troops who had been supporting Col. Gummatov had deserted and declared their allegiance to the Baku government, he said.

"Many of Gummatov's soldiers laid down their weapons and refused to obey him," Mr. Aliyev said. "But there are still some people who are still under his command. These people are participants in his crimes."

There was no immediate comment from the rebel side.

The rebels had set up frontier posts between the self-proclaimed "Talysh-Mugansk Republic" and the rest of Azerbaijan.

The violence broke out when several thousand people gathered in Lenkeran to protest against Col. Gummatov's plans. Rebel troops opened fire to disperse the crowd and Interfax News Agency said some demonstrators fired back.

The crowd then seized the rebel headquarters, in the Lenkeran local administrative centre, and Col. Gummatov disappeared.

Mr. Aliyev, a former Azeri Communist Party leader who was appointed acting president after an army revolt in June, described the three dead men as "national heroes."

He accused Ayaz Matalibov, another former Azeri Communist Party chief, and ex-Defence Minister Rahim Gaziyev, of being behind the rebellion.

He also criticised Prime Minister Suret Huseinov, who led the June army revolt, suggesting that he too had been sympathetic to Col. Gummatov.

There was no immediate reaction to the allegations.

Meanwhile Azerbaijani troops have fled from the key city of Jebail, south of Nagorno-Karabakh, after several days' siege by Armenian forces, correspondents on the scene reported Tuesday.

A T-72 tank and several artillery guns, including a Grad multiple rocket launcher, fired on Armenian positions for two hours late Monday to cover the withdrawal of the last Azerbaijani soldiers from the television station in the southwest of the city.

The Armenian forces took over the Azeri positions around Jebail, but respected their commander's orders not to enter the city.

Angolan troops advance; Mandela announces peace bid

LISBON (AP) — Angolan government forces Tuesday claimed military advances in a southern province, further pinning key UNITA rebel positions in the central highlands.

As fighting raged, three African leaders appealed to Angola's warring parties to attend a fresh round of peace talks in Morocco.

African National Congress (ANC) leader Nelson Mandela announced in Johannesburg that he, Morocco's King Hassan II and President Felix Houphouët-Boigny of Ivory Coast had written letters to Angolan President Jose Eduardo Dos Santos and UNITA chief Jonas Savimbi urging them to attend the talks.

Mr. Mandela did not say when the proposed talks were scheduled.

The United Nations have set a Sept. 15 deadline for Angolan peace talks to resume.

But there has been no sign of a let up in fighting three weeks into a major government offensive focussed on UNITA's central stronghold of Huambo, which the rebels seized after a brutal siege in March.

Angolan state radio claimed that government forces had taken the town of Hoque and were closing in on Cacula, both in Huila province.

CIA pinned JFK conspiracy theories on KGB

WASHINGTON (R) — The CIA, worried about conspiracy theories linking it to the assassination of John F. Kennedy, tried more than three years after the event to blame "Communist propagandists" as a key source of the allegations.

Almost one million pages of official documents made public Monday also faulted the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency for "confusing and sometimes contradictory" reporting on the murder but found "no solid evidence" of sinister behaviour.

They showed the CIA closely watched assassin Lee Harvey Oswald and apparently photographed him during a mysterious visit to Mexico City less than a month before Kennedy's death in November, 1963, although the agency denied having pictures.

In an intriguing disclosure, the House of Representatives Select Committee on Assassinations reported Oswald had a sexual relationship with a Mexican secretary at the Cuban consulate whom the CIA had apparently targeted for recruitment.

The reported sexual liaison added a new dimension to Oswald's shadowy visit to Mexico City in September and October 1963, a trip which has caused controversy among researchers.

"It certainly complicates the picture and raises a new level of uncertainty as to what was really going on in the crucial episodes in Mexico City," James Lesar, a lawyer heading the non-profit Assassination Archives and Research Centre, said.

"It suggests the possibility of collusion between the two of them and possibly others," he added in an interview.

The woman, whom Reuters has decided not to name for reasons of privacy, called the Soviet consulate in Mexico City twice to discuss a request by Oswald for a Soviet visa.

In the past 30 years, Oswald's contacts in Mexico City have been variously construed by researchers to suggest he worked for the CIA, the Soviet KGB, Cuba or the mafia.

The previously secret House report, titled "Oswald, The CIA And Mexico City," cited CIA officials' testimony that the woman had been identified for recruitment by the CIA, but said it had been unable to "definitely resolve" whether she in fact had been a Mexican or U.S. intelligence agent or source.

In a telephone interview from Mexico City Monday, the woman denied having had an intimate relationship with Oswald or having had a link to any intelligence agency. "I was working at the (Cuban) embassy and that's all," she told Reuters.

Researchers will take months to digest the new information, made public under a government-wide disclosure law enacted last year to counter conspiracy claims.

Steven Tilley, the National Archives liaison person for JFK material, estimated up to one million pages being unveiled, much of it previously secret. Included were 125,000 pages of CIA documents, plus records of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the State Department, the Secret Service, Office of Management and Budget, presidential libraries and congressional panels.

In an April 1, 1967, directive to "chiefs: certain stations and bases," CIA Headquarters said the conspiracy theories abounded after the 1964 Warren Commission

Michael Jackson's homes searched in crime probe

LOS ANGELES (R) — Police searched Michael Jackson's homes over the weekend as part of a criminal investigation targeting the superstar, but associates said it stemmed from a botched extortion plot against Jackson.

The probe, which began six days ago, resulted from a complaint involving Jackson filed with the Los Angeles Police Department, police spokesman David Gascon said. He declined to provide details.

Asked whether Jackson was considered a suspect or a victim in the case, Mr. Gascon declined comment.

In Bangkok, where Jackson launched his Dangerous concert tour of Asia Tuesday night, promoter Brian Marcar said the entertainer had known the searches would take place.

"This is not something that happened last night. This is a very old case, really, so there is no reaction," Mr. Marcar said.

"You know, when you are a superstar people want to discredit you, they want to extort money," he said. "It is a normal thing."

"His biggest problem is getting ready to perform tonight, hoping that it isn't going to rain," Mr. Marcar told Reuters.

Investigators armed with search warrants raided Jackson's Neverland Valley Ranch north-west of Los Angeles and his condominium in the suburb of Century City Saturday, a law enforcement source confirmed. But there was no word on what they were searching for.

"On Aug. 17, the Los Angeles Police Department initiated a criminal investigation of entertainer Michael Jackson," Mr. Gascon told a news conference after police headquarters was flooded with media calls from around the world.

"We have been in contact with the district attorney's office. We are not disclosing any aspect of the investigation at this point," Mr. Gascon said.

Anthony Pellicano, a private detective who said he had worked with Jackson for four years, told Los Angeles television station KNBC the investigation was the result of "extortion gone awry" and predicted the entertainer would be cleared.

Sydney sees Beijing as main Olympics rival

SYDNEY (R) — There is no escaping Sydney's Olympic dream, whether you take a ferry around the harbour, a taxi to the opera or a bus to Bondi Beach. Multi-coloured streamers flutter everywhere, urging locals and tourists alike to "share the spirit."

Sydney, following two recent unsuccessful Australian bids, wants the 2000 Olympics with a vengeance.

"Sydney is the athletes' choice," said Bob Elphinstone, general manager of the bid, in typically blunt Australian terms.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) will hand down its decision in Monte Carlo September 23.

One local bookmaker, in a profession not renowned for putting sentiment before sense, has Sydney odds on favourite at 8-11, with Beijing at 11-8 and Manchester at 6-1.

In many respects, Sydney seems to have it made.

The city of 3.5 million people has 140 ethnic groups — pretty much guaranteeing support for most members of the Olympic family — a sports-mad population, near-perfect climate, fine facilities and strong political backing.

The IOC's enquiry commission technical report released last month virtually said as much.

"If you like at the 23 things that matter on the technical side, the Sydney bid is bloody near perfect," one IOC official told Reuters in London last month. It's so far ahead of the others, it's quite breathtaking.

The IOC's decision ends 2½ years of lobbying by six cities — although reading the local press gives the impression that only Sydney and Beijing are in the frame.

Little is heard about Berlin and Manchester, almost nothing about rank outsider Istanbul. Brasilia withdrew its bid earlier this month.

If Sydney wins it will be the second time the games have been held in the southern hemisphere. The Australian city of Melbourne hosted the 1956 games.

The Australian government views the games as a means to boost the country's building and tourist industry.

In concrete terms, Sydney already has about 65 per cent of Olympic venues completed or under construction.

The plan has 14 of the 25 summer Olympic sports within walking distance to the Olympic village at Homebush, 14 km (nine miles) west of the city.

The village would house all 10,000 athletes in one place for the first time in Olympic history.

The bid has even enlisted scientists to develop a hi-tech swimming pool which should guarantee world records.

The environment has also been integral to the bid and the campaigning group Greenpeace helped design the village, which will use solar panels and recycle water.

The Olympic flags have already been put up, fluttering alongside the road, from atop the Sydney harbour bridge, from warehouses, offices, and hotels.

The decision remains to be made.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Taylor gives Gaza green light

LONDON (AFP) — England manager Graham Taylor has picked Paul Gascoigne for the critical World Cup qualifier against Poland after a clandestine visit to Rome to check on the player's condition. Taylor flew to Rome and paid to watch Gaza in Lazio's 1-0 win over Roma in a warm-up match. He confirmed later that the controversial midfielder star would be in the squad for the September 8 match at Wembley. Last week, Lazio club doctor Claudio Bartolini insisted: "Paul is only 50 per cent fit after his crazy summer." But Taylor, who names his selection next Monday, said Gaza looked "no less fit than any other Lazio player." Gascoigne reportedly returned from his summer holiday a stone overweight.

Laudrup return boosts Denmark

COPENHAGEN (AFP) — Denmark's chances of qualifying for the World Cup finals have been boosted by the return of Barcelona's Michael Laudrup after three years in the international wilderness. Laudrup joins brother Brian, currently on loan to AC Milan, in an attacking squad named by coach Richard Moller-Nielsen for the European Championships' crucial Group 3 match against Lithuania on Wednesday. Martin Jorgensen, picked for the 4-0 win over Albania in June, has been omitted to make way for the 29-year-old. Laudrup, voted Barcelona's best player last year when he snatched the title from Real Madrid on the final day, has not played for his country since November 1990. He opted to go on holiday to the United States rather than join the squad that triumphed in the European Championships in Sweden last summer.

O'Leary out of Ireland's World Cup clash

DUBLIN (R) — Injury has forced veteran defender David O'Leary out of the Ireland squad for their World Cup qualifying soccer match at home to Lithuania September 8. O'Leary, 35, suffered an Achilles tendon injury playing for his new club Leeds against Norwich Saturday.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMMAM HIRSHI
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FORGET THOSE BROMIDES

North-South vulnerable. West deals.

NORTH
♠ K Q 7 5
♥ Q 3
♦ Q 5 4 3
♣ A 10 5

EAST
♠ 10 8 2
♥ A 10 7 5 2
♦ A
♣ 9 7 6 4

SOUTH
♠ A 9 4
♥ 9 8 4
♦ 10 8 7 6 2
♣ 8 3

The bidding:
West North East South
2♥ Pass Pass Pass

Opening lead: Seven of ♠

There is an old bridge axiom: "Cover an honor with an honor," to which can almost surely be added, "especially if the queen is led and you hold the K J." But every hand must be treated on its own merits, as this deal from the 9th World Bridge Olympiad demonstrates.

Sitting East-West, respectively, for the U.S. were Jeff Meckstroth and Eric Rodwell, playing against

Alain Levy and Hervé Mougel of France, North-South. At this vulnerability, the U.S. pair use very undisciplined weak two-bids, which accounts for both West's opening bid and East's failure to raise with what is likely to be the best hand at the table. Since the diamond holding was over the doubler, East felt his hand was better suited for defense.

West led the seven of clubs, taken with the ace. The contract was surely going down — barring a defensive collapse, declarer must lose two hearts, a club and at least two trumps. Mougel tried to limit the damage by making the fine play of the queen of trumps from dummy at trick two.

We know many defenders who would cover with the king reflexively. Great would have been the fall thereon, and declarer would later lead toward the ten to escape with two trump losers and a one-trick set. However, Meckstroth worked out that there was no way that covering with the king could possibly gain. If declarer held the ace-ten of trumps, the defenders would be limited to one trump trick either way. So East ducked, and declarer had to concede three trump tricks — down two.

Laith Al Azzouni wins Jordan Tennis Championship

By Aileen Bannayan
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordan's tennis scene, long dominated by No. 1 ranked Hani Al Ali and 2nd-ranked Imad Abu Hamda, may soon have a new champion — 16-year-old Laith Al Azzouni.

During the 1993 Jordan Tennis Championship which ended Monday at the Jordan Tennis Federation (JTF) courts, Azzouni caused the biggest upset of the championship when he defeated Abu Hamda 6-2, 6-2 in the semifinals. He then went on to win the championship after defeating his elder brother, Faris, 4-6, 6-1, 7-6 in the final.

Faris Azzouni had overcome Ayman Abu Jaber 6-1, 6-2 in the other semifinal.

"Laith had nothing to lose. He didn't feel the pressure. Imad must have felt," a JTF official Tuesday told the Jordan Times. "Laith has come a long way, and will continue to



Laith Al Azzouni

improve," he added.

He also pointed out that there were many bad calls by the referees during the matches.

"We have to improve this aspect of the game," he said.

64 competitors took part in the championship, the King's titleholder for the past decade, Al Ali, did not participate.



PALESTINE HANDBALL CUP: Jordan faces Palestine in Palestine Handball Cup championship inaugurated Tuesday by His Royal Highness Prince Faisal Ben Al Hussein at Hussein Youth City. Taking part in the championship are teams from Palestine, Tunisia, Syria and Jordan

Bruguera, Ivanisevic win

COMMACK, N.Y. (AP) — Sergi Bruguera, the French Open champion playing his first hard-court match of the summer, routed Alex O'Brien 6-2 6-3 Monday in the first round of the \$300,000 Hamlet Cup.

Bruguera, the third seed from Spain, advanced to the second round of this U.S. Open tuneup along with No. 7 Goran Ivanisevic of Croatia, No. 8 Alexander Volkov of Russia and Carl Uwe-Steich of Germany.

Ivanisevic, playing in the featured night match, overcame 17 aces by Marc Goellner of Germany to win 7-6 (9-7), 6-3. Goellner, who also had seven double-faults, held a set point in the tiebreaker at 7-6. Ivanisevic erased it with a passing shot to start a surge that put him ahead 3-0 in the second set.

"It was my best match in a long time and I feel good about it," Ivanisevic said.

In another night match, Patrick McEnroe was ahead 6-1 when Alex Corretja of Spain retired with what is believed to be a torn thigh muscle.

Bruguera has won four titles on clay this year, including the French, and has a 41-9 record on the surface. He had little trouble with O'Brien, the 1992 NCAA champion from Stanford who is ranked 103rd in the world.

Bruguera shrugged off questions why he waited until the week before the U.S. Open to prepare on hardcourts.

Bruguera's last hardcourt tournament was Indian Wells, Calif., in early March. He lost in the first round to Brad Gilbert.

Volkov, playing his sixth straight week on hardcourts, eliminated qualifier Robbie Weiss 6-4, 6-4.

Steeb beat fellow German David Prinosil 6-4, 7-5. He took a 4-0 lead in the first set but had to

reel from a 3-5, 0-40 deficit in the second set.

"I was lucky," said Steeb, who had been sidelined several weeks with a knee injury. "He made five unforced errors when he had me down. But I felt good because it was the first day I've played without pain."

Perforators advanced in OTB Tennis: In Schenectady, New York, seventh-seed Mikael Pernfors of Sweden survived a scare to beat Stephane Simonian of France 3-6 7-6 (7-4) 7-5 in the first round of the \$350,000 OTB International Open tennis tournament Monday.

Pernfors lost the first set 3-6 and went down an early break in the second, but rallied to win that set in a tiebreak 7-4.

Top 20 women's tennis players, according to rankings issued by the Women's Tennis Association Monday:

1. Steffi Graf (Germany)
2. Monica Seles (Yugoslavia)
3. Arantxa Sanchez Vicario (Spain)
4. Martina Navratilova (U.S.)
5. Conchita Martinez (Spain)
6. Gabriela Sabatini (Argentina)
7. Mary Joe Fernandez (U.S.)
8. Jennifer Capriati (U.S.)
9. Jana Novotna (Czech Republic)
10. Anke Huber (Germany)
11. Magdalena Maleeva (Bulgaria)
12. Masoela Maleeva-Fragniere (Switzerland)
13. Helena Sukova (Czech Republic)
14. Mary Pierce (France)
15. Nathalie Tauziat (France)
16. Amanda Coetzer (South Africa)
17. Zina Garrison-Jackson (U.S.)
18. Sabine Hack (Germany)
19. Kimiko Date (Japan)
20. Katerina Maleeva (Bulgaria)

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U.S. is No.1 track power; China new No.2

STUTTGART (Agencies) — The United States is back as the world's dominant track and field power.

With the breakup of the Soviet Union and the consolidation of the Germans into one team, the Americans have regained the position they held before those nations emerged strongly into the sport.

The Americans did it with an overpowering performance at the World Championships that ended Sunday.

For the first time, the Americans finished atop the medal standings, collecting 26 medals, half of them gold.

At the 1991-Tokyo Championships, the U.S. team also earned 26 medals, 10 golds, but finished second in total medals to the Soviet Union's 28. This time, the Russian team got only 16 medals, including three golds, all by women.

Germany, the medals leader at the first two championships in 1983 and 1987 with 30 and 34 medals, respectively — the totals being a combination of the West German and East German teams — wound up with 17 medals in 1991 and only 8 this time.

The biggest improvement for the United States team was among the women. After garnering a total of only six golds in the previous three championships, they won five in the meet — Gail Devers with a rare double in the 100-metre dash and the 100-metre hurdles, Pearl Miles in the 400, Jackie Joyner-Kersey in the heptathlon and the 1,600-metre relay team of Gwen Torrence, Maicel Malonee, Natasha Kaiser-Brown and Miles.

"I think it is a flavour of things to come for the women, because there are a lot of young women out there," U.S. women's coach Ernie Gregoire said. "Most of our medalists are in their mid-to-late 20s and there's some good legs left under them."

The U.S. men's team also appears to have a solid future.

"We have some great, young talent coming up," said Michael Johnson, the world 400-metre champion.

While the United States was re-emerging as the No. 1 track power, China was emerging as an important force. The Chinese, winner of only seven medals — two golds — in the previous three championships, went home with eight medals, four golds, all of them by women. It was their best performance in a major competition.

Their gold medal total put the Chinese in second place, one ahead of such formidable track



China's Junxia Wang and Huardi Zhong do an honour round with their national flag after winning gold and silver respectively in the women's 10,000 metre event (AFP photo)

nations as Russia, Britain and Kenya.

The Chinese have a rapidly developing programme, with emphasis on the women, because they feel that women's records are soft and can be broken easily.

The Chinese were ostracised in the international sports community until making their international debut at the 1983 World Championships at Helsinki.

Now, they have track officials crisscrossing the nation in search of talent.

"The coaches select them and put them in systematic training," team leader Chang Xiutang said.

Great Britain's new record-breaking world champions Sally Gunnell and Colin Jackson have agreed to take part in the Goodwill Games in St. Petersburg, Russia, next year.

The event, hosted at the newly-renovated Petrovsky Stadium, takes place between July 23-August 7.

Around 2,000 athletes from more than 50 countries are expected to take part in the event, first hosted in 1986.

Gunnell ran a new world mark of 52.74sec to take the women's 400m title at Stuttgart last week, while Welshman Jackson's world best time of 12.91 won him the men's 100m title.

The U.S. women's 4x400m relay team acknowledge applause after they won the gold medal (AFP photo)

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Gunnell ran a new world mark of 52.74sec to take the women's 400m title at Stuttgart last week, while Welshman Jackson's world best time of 12.91 won him the men's 100m title.

Brazil devoid of flair, say critics

RIO DE JANEIRO (R) — Brazil's World Cup qualifying win over Ecuador kept trainer Carlos Alberto Parreira happy but was an immense disappointment to those who admire Brazil's traditional flair and panache.

There were no clever flicks, quick one-twos or swerving free kicks which have delighted World Cup audiences in the past.

Instead, Brazil's play turned into a dull routine of square passes and high crosses into the Ecuador penalty area. It became so predictable that their performance was described as "mechanical" by one newspaper.

Brazil won 2-0 to take an important step towards the World Cup finals in the United States. Bolivia, who beat Venezuela 7-0 Sunday lead the Group B stand-

ings with ten points from five matches, followed by Brazil, who have six points from five matches, and Ecuador, four from five. Uruguay have four points from four games, while Venezuela have lost all five of their games.

But the 77,000 crowd at the Morumbi Stadium were not satisfied and jeered Brazil in the second half, shouting "get out Parreira" and chanting the name of former national team coach Tele Santana.

The only inspiration came from striker Bebeto, who scored the first goal and set up the second for Dunga with two moments of brilliance. Otherwise, Brazil may have struggled to break down the massed ranks of the Ecuador defence.

Parreira, who has been severe-

ly criticised for his unadventurous team selections, again made himself unpopular by picking three defensive midfield players in Dunga, Zinho and Mauro Silva.

With captain Rai again out of sorts, Bebeto and fellow striker Muller often had to come back to do the midfield's creative work for them.

Parreira bewildered fans and commentators by leaving

Palhinha and Cafu, two of Brazil's most skillful midfielders, on the substitute's bench until the closing minutes.

Their names were chanted by the Sao Paulo crowd throughout the match.

Parreira remained defiant and said he was not worried about the jeering.

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PLO asks its diplomats to quit, fires local staff

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) has sacked local staff at its diplomatic missions and asked its representatives to take voluntary redundancy because of the organisation's financial crisis.

Several Palestinian officials feared the cuts were a prelude to liquidating the 29-year-old PLO, which has around 15,000 members.

The PLO's political department chief, Farouq Kaddoumi, has sent a circular to the organisation's offices around the world ordering them to fire locally hired employees and asking for voluntary redundancies.

"We have waited for more than three months to get our salary. But what we got is a circular from the PLO leadership telling us that anyone can resign if he wishes," said a Gulf-based PLO official.

"It is aimed at liquidating the organisation and amount to a final blow to the institutions so they will be handed over to Israel with no spirit," he charged, declining to be named.

"But we will not resign because we are strugglers not employees. We joined the PLO to fight for our land not under any business contract."

The official read the brief circular to AFP by telephone, saying PLO offices in the Gulf had been in touch over the circular and all their members were refusing to resign.

The Tunis-based PLO has 100 missions around the world, 75 of which are recognised as fully-fledged embassies.

The organisation is suffering its worst crisis due to political and financial woes, notably because of a cut in aid from the oil-rich Gulf because of the organisation's sympathy for Iraq after the 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Some PLO officials have

blamed its leader Yasser Arafat for the crisis and called for his resignation, including the military chief in Lebanon of the organisation's mainstream Fatah group, Munir Maqadha.

Once the wealthiest guerrilla group in the world, the PLO has now been forced to sell part of its assets.

"The most serious thing in this crisis is that the PLO leadership has abandoned the families of martyrs. They have not received a penny for more than five months," another Gulf-based PLO official complained.

"This is the worst crisis in the PLO's history because it is internal while previous crises were mainly caused by external factors," one official said.

"We believe that those who are responsible for the crisis and all previous mistakes must resign not us. By asking us to resign, the PLO is abandoning its members after several years of serving our national causes."

One official said he had been in the PLO for 25 years and would look for another job but would not submit his resignation.

"You can resign from a bank or a company but not from a struggle for freedom and identity. I have contacted the PLO headquarters and all they had to say is that I can go to Lebanon, Syria or Jordan and report to PLO offices there."

According to the circular, PLO representatives who resign would receive one-third of their severance pay now and the rest in monthly installments.

The organisation has closed several institutions in the Israeli-occupied territories and abroad because of the crisis and slashed its aid to the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza Strip by two-thirds.

Croats hold up U.N. emergency Mostar food

MOSTAR, Bosnia (Agencies) — A U.N. aid convoy set out Tuesday with food and medicine for 55,000 Muslims trapped in Mostar but Bosnian Croat forces held it up because of a dispute over the return of the bodies of Croat soldiers.

The 19-truck convoy stalled in Medjugorje, a small southern Bosnian town close to Mostar, after negotiations between Jadranko Prlic, a senior political official in the Bosnian Croat leadership, and U.N. officials broke down.

In Mostar, Muslim fighters said the Croat defence force (HVO), which authorised the convoy, had unleashed a mortar, machinegun and artillery barrage on the Muslim-held eastern sector of the town.

The onslaught began shortly before 6 a.m. (0400 GMT) and continued into the afternoon.

It killed at least two civilians, wounded five soldiers and wrecked the pharmacy at a makeshift hospital where victims of the Croat blockade are being treated.

Three mortar hits on the pharmacy destroyed desperately needed medical supplies delivered by a token U.N. convoy which the Croats allowed to cross their lines at the weekend.

Journalists huddling near the front line from the warring communities reported heavy gunfire in all directions.

Ambulances and cars sped towards the hospital.

Alema Lisinski, spokeswoman for the U.N. High Com-

missioner for Refugees (UNHCR), told reporters in Zagreb the convoy entered Bosnia from Croatia shortly after midday (1000 GMT).

It had planned to reach Mostar in mid-afternoon.

Nineteen trucks authorised by the HVO were carrying enough food to last the Muslim population for a week.

The civilians in the Muslim quarter have not received U.N. food since June 2 and aid officials fear people will start dying of starvation soon.

U.N. peacekeepers who reached the area Saturday said hospital conditions were desperate.

Some operations were being performed without anaesthesia, more than 40 per cent of the residents were refugees and 60 per cent of the buildings were uninhabitable, they said.

Croats and Muslims each made up some 42 per cent of Mostar's pre-war population 130,000, and lived in peace. They united earlier this year to oppose Bosnian Serbs, but their alliance disintegrated as plans for an ethnic division of Bosnia emerged.

Bosnia's Croats want Mostar to be the capital of a Croat-dominated republic. Fighting between the city's Muslim and Croat communities broke out in May.

Despite a Bosnian ceasefire signed Aug 11 and last week's peace talks in Geneva, sporadic fighting was reported across Bosnia on Monday.

Montazeri in hospital

NICOSIA (R) — Iran's Ayatollah Hossein Ali Montazeri, barred from politics by the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini who dismissed him as his designated successor, has been admitted to a Tehran hospital suffering from kidney stones, his son said Tuesday.

Saeed Montazeri said intelligence officials prevented the 71-year-old cleric's admission to a public hospital in Tehran last week when he went there with a heart ailment.

"He is generally fine but has kidney stones. Doctors have prescribed medication for now and have not yet decided on the main treatment," he told Reuters by telephone from Khatam-ul-Anbia hospital.

He said Ayatollah Montazeri was admitted to the hospital, which is run by the Martyr Foundation, on Sunday.

Ayatollah Montazeri has been banished from official Iranian politics since Ayatollah Khomeini dismissed him as his designated heir three months before he died in 1989. He continued teaching theology in the Holy Shiite Muslim city of Qom south of Tehran.

He has occasionally come into conflict with Iranian leaders after making critical statements. In February when his office was ransacked and five of his aides were arrested.

Saeed Montazeri said intelligence officials went to Qom on August 16 when doctors there recommended Ayatollah Montazeri stay for checks for 48 hours.

"They told the doctors it was not expedient for him to be in Tehran and he should return to Qom. The doctors resisted to some extent, but ultimately had to give in," he said.

King and Qaboos hold talks

(Continued from page 1)

jali, Royal Court Chief Khalid Al Karaki, Chief Chamberlain Prince Ra'd Ben Zeid, Private Chamberlain Prince Ali Ben

Nayef and senior civil and military officials in addition to the Omani ambassador to Jordan.

Prince Mohammad was sworn in to serve as the Regent during the King's absence.



DEPARTURE: His Majesty King Hussein with his son, Prince Mohammad, the personal representative of the King, at the airport Tuesday shortly before the King left on a visit to Oman (Petra photo)

Fateh leader urges Arafat to resign

BEIRUT (AP) — Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, increasingly beleaguered by opponents within the movement Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), faced further strife Tuesday when his militia commander in Lebanon called on him to resign.

Munir Maqadha, who heads the 3,000-strong force, denounced Mr. Arafat's handling of the Middle East peace talks and accused him of begging tens of thousands of Palestinians in a financial crisis that is crippling the PLO.

Mr. Maqadha's broadside fuelled a swelling leadership crisis within the PLO in which Mr. Arafat is facing unprecedented public criticism.

Officials at PLO headquarters in Tunis said the movement's decision-making executive committee will meet Thursday to discuss the crisis following the resignation of senior figures opposed to Mr. Arafat.

By all accounts, the critical session is likely to be heated.

A growing number of senior Palestinians are openly challenging Mr. Arafat and demanding sweeping reforms, including greater consultations on how to proceed in the 21-month-old deadlocked negotiations with Israel.

Mr. Maqadha, based in the refugee camp of Ain al Hilweh near the southern provincial capital of Sidon, was the first PLO military commander to criticise Mr. Arafat over his peace talks strategy and the movement's worsening financial crisis under his authoritarian leadership.

The crisis has been building for months, with large numbers of Palestinians in the Israeli-occupied territories demanding Mr. Arafat pull Palestinian negotiators out of the U.S.-sponsored talks until Israel agrees to discuss an independent Palestinian state.

The Jewish state will only discuss limited autonomy inside the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The crisis has accelerated amid reports that Mr. Arafat told the

United States through Egypt that he is prepared to accept self-rule only in Gaza as a first step towards an eventual independent state.

"If Mr. Arafat cannot find a solution except Gaza as a result of American threats and seduction through the Egyptian regime, then he has to resign," Mr. Maqadha said in a statement published by the independent Al Nahar Daily.

The Palestinian negotiators themselves have repeatedly clashed with Mr. Arafat, who insists on continuing the negotiations despite Israel's failure to make concessions.

Mr. Maqadha also accused Mr. Arafat of imposing an "economic blockade" on his own people, a reference to the PLO's financial crisis.

He charged that the crisis has turned the movement's "officers, fighters and martyrs' families into beggars throughout ... the world."

The PLO was slashed pay-

ments to Palestinian refugees and the dependents of slain guerrillas and introduced sweeping austerity measures because of the three-year-old crisis (see separate story).

PLO officials refuse to discuss the movement's financial affairs. Much of the PLO's wealth, estimated at between \$2 to \$5 billion, is reportedly deposited in Swiss banks in Mr. Arafat's name.

Mr. Maqadha joined at least five other top PLO officials in calling for an extraordinary meeting of the Palestine National Council.

The PLO's Lebanon representative, Shafiq Al Hout, an independent member of the Executive Committee, Sunday suspended his membership pending a PNC meeting to discuss Mr. Arafat's "irresponsible and adventurous" policies.

Two days earlier, Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish, another independent figure often termed the "PLO's conscience," resigned from the Executive Committee to protest Mr. Arafat's policies.

Swiss-Turkish dispute bursts into the open

ANKARA (Agencies) — Turkey Tuesday asked Switzerland to recall its ambassador in Ankara and two embassy attaches in a week's time.

"We have asked Switzerland to withdraw its ambassador (Andre Ramseyer) and two attaches, Jean-Pierre Baumeier and Hendrich Maurer," a Foreign Ministry communiqué said.

The action was a diplomat tit-for-tat in response to the decision by Swiss authorities Wednesday to lift the diplomatic immunity of Turkish Ambassador in Bern Kaya Toperi, who returned here Friday, observers noted.

The Turkish government "rejects" the lifting of the diplomatic immunity of its ambassador and officials here said Mr. Toperi was here for "consultations."

Swiss authorities lifted the immunity of Mr. Toperi and another Turkish embassy employee in order to question them in connection with a shootout with Kurdish demonstrators outside the Bern embassy that left one dead and nine wounded in July.

Ankara had also recalled four of its Bern embassy staffers in connection with the incident, after refusing to have their diplomatic immunity lifted.

Mr. Toperi has said he ordered embassy staff to fire into the air to prevent the demonstrators, militants of the Kurdish Labour Party (PKK), from storming the embassy. Witnesses say they fired at the legs of the demonstrators.

On his return to Turkey on Friday, Mr. Toperi accused Switzerland of acting negligently during the protest.

Diplomatic relations between Turkey and Switzerland will continue at charge d'affaires level until Switzerland appoints a new ambassador to Ankara, Anatolia news agency said.

Ankara would then appoint a new envoy to Bern, it said.

Hostages rescued

Turkish soldiers killed eight PKK guerrillas Monday while freeing two Britons and two Afghans kidnapped hours earlier by the rebels, a Turkish official said.

Turkish troops chased the guerrillas on a tip from witnesses of the midnight abduction in the Batman province in southeastern Turkey, said the official.

In London, the Foreign Office confirmed that two Britons were freed after a clash between the rebels and security forces. The Britons were believed to be returning from a visit to Lake Van.

Afghans use the same route after entering Turkey from Iran.

The PKK is still holding seven more tourists — three Swiss, one Italian, two Germans and a New Zealander — abducted this month in the increasingly bloody conflict raging around the wild mountains of Turkey's southeast.

The Swiss foreign ministry has stressed that efforts to recover their nationals would not be hampered by the diplomatic row.

Switzerland, like other western states, have ruled out negotiations with the PKK, which demands that the governments of the kidnapped tourists negotiate directly for their release.

Israel polluting River Jordan, official says

By Ayman Al Safadi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Israel bears the sole responsibility for the high level of pollution in the Jordan River, an official said Tuesday.

Abdul Aziz Wishah, director of the Jordan Valley Authority (JVA), said Israel had been polluting the river by piping sewage and salty water into it.

"Israel pipes domestic and industrial sewage and salty waters into the river. It is fully responsible for polluting it," Dr. Wishah said.

He said the salinity level in the river's water had increased since Israel stopped the flow of sweet water from the Tiberias Lake into the river.

Israel has diverted the water of the Tiberias away from the river to irrigate agricultural land, and the diversion has also substantially lowered the river's water level.

Israel's nature reserves authority said Tuesday that sewage seeping into the River Jordan had pushed bacteria in its waters to 2.5 times the permitted level for swimming.

Agence France Press (AFP) said the pollution was found where the river flows into the Sea

of Galilee and traced upstream to the Hula Valley where sewage was flowing into the river.

The agency quoted an Israeli health ministry official as saying that more tests were needed to find out whether the whole upper stretch of the river was polluted.

Most of the areas on the bank of the river in Jordan are closed to civilians as military zones. Visits to the river are restricted.

Dr. Wishah said little could be done to treat the pollution in the river due to the "political situation and technical difficulties."

Water rights is one of the major issues that Jordan and Israel are discussing in the multi-lateral and bilateral phases of the Middle East peace process, which was launched in Madrid in 1991.

Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali said in June that Israel had recognised Jordan's demands for returning its rights to the waters of the Jordan and Yarmouk rivers.

"The fundamental achievements of the peace process have so far included an Israeli recognition... (of the need) to return our rights in the waters of the Yarmouk and Jordan rivers," Dr. Majali said.

King Fahd lashes out at 'smear campaign'

RIVADH (AP) — King Fahd has complained of "smear campaigns" following foreign media reports that painted a gloomy picture of Saudi Arabia's economy and said recent political reforms fell short of Western-style democracy.

But, said King Fahd, "malevolent people cannot block the sunlight, and truth will always vanquish falsity, though it may take time."

King Fahd was addressing citizens at his traditional weekly Majlis, or open house. Excerpts were broadcast by state-run television on its midnight newscast Monday.

The New York Times reported Sunday and Monday that a decade of huge military spending and irregular banking practices had depleted Saudi Arabia's \$121 billion of reserves and undermined its financial stability.

Arab diplomatic sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the report displeased the Saudi leadership.

King Fahd currently is being inundated by expressions of support from leading figures, hailing his weekend appointment of a 60-member consultative assembly that will give citizens a formal say in policy for the first time.

The sources said the leadership also was displeased by foreign media reports that pointed out the move falls short of Western-style democracy.

King Fahd has said repeatedly that he believes Western democracy to be an unsuitable model for his kingdom to follow.

In his remarks broadcast Mon-

day, the king denounced "those unjust and provocative smear campaigns that target the kingdom in an attempt to distort the facts and fabricate lies..."

The king has implied he will reshuffle his government, a major development in a country that has had an almost stable cabinet for two decades. He also has ruled that ministers' terms will be limited to four years unless they are extended by royal decree.

There was a "comprehensive renaissance in all fields" throughout the kingdom, King Fahd said.

Saudi-based Western businessmen and bankers, along with Saudi economists, said they thought the Times story on the kingdom's financial woes was off base.

"It lacks perspective, and in both absolute and historical terms ... it fails to show the current situation in context," said a Western businessman who has been in the kingdom for several years.

He said the oil-rich economy has considerable capacity to carry debt, and was still at the beginning of the road when it came to developing capital markets and rationalisation of industry.

The kingdom of 12 million Saudis and 4.6 million foreigners sits on nearly a third of the world's proven oil reserves. Producing eight million barrels a day, it is the world's largest oil exporter.

The oil price slide that ended the oil boom of the 1970s has put the Saudi budget in the red since 1983, forcing the kingdom to start borrowing on the international market in 1988.

U.S. report questions cost of Arrow programme

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — Israel may be underestimating the cost of its Arrow anti-missile system that is being developed with U.S. funds, a congressional report said on Monday.

The report from the General Accounting Office (GAO), the congressional investigating agency, said the United States may be drawn into funding most of the system without the benefit of sound information.

"Due to technical risk and other factors, we believe Israel's estimate for additional funds needed to develop, produce, deploy and support a complete system — including launchers, radars and other related equipment — may be understated," the unclassified report said.

"Moreover, the United States may be drawn into funding most of the complete Israeli system without the benefit of sound cost, schedule and performance information," it said.

The report's conclusions had been made public in July by Democratic Senator Robert Byrd of West Virginia who questioned whether the United States should continue funding the project.

The United States is providing most of the money for development of the Arrow, but is not planning to buy any of the missiles for the U.S. Armed Forces.

The report recommended that before additional U.S. funds are committed for the Arrow, the Defence Department develop accurate figures for the full cost of the system and consider U.S. alternatives to the Arrow for meeting Israel's ballistic missile defence needs.

During the 1991 Gulf war, the United States sent Patriot anti-missile units to Israel to defend against Iraq Scud attacks.

Israel never transferred any U.S. technology connected to the

Arrow programme to other countries, the Israeli defence ministry said Tuesday.

The ministry strongly denied the GAO report that the U.S. government is failing to protect its technology from being transferred to third countries.

A statement noted that close cooperation between Israel Aircraft Industries and Pentagon officials precluded any leaks.

The Arrow project began in 1988 and is costing the United States \$461 million — 72 per cent of the costs — but the first three Arrow flight tests were unsuccessful.

The Israeli defence ministry said that estimates were realistic.

"The Israeli estimates as to the cost of full scale engineering development, production and deployment, of an Arrow weapon system, are performed according to the normal Israeli practices and past experience," the statement said.

The ministry also took issue with the GAO's complaint that no missile has been intercepted in tests so far.

"Israel realises that the Arrow programme involves a certain level of risk," it acknowledged, but went on to say: "The Arrow project has been making genuine progress in developing cutting-edge" ballistic missile defence technology.

The Arrow has undergone five tests so far. A sixth was cancelled in July following a technical hitch, and was rescheduled for September.

"Israel intends to deploy the Arrow system, as a response to its ballistic missile threat, as soon as possible," the ministry said. "The need to counter the ballistic missile threat, and the Israeli experience in the Gulf war, justifies taking a calculated risk."

COLUMN

Japanese empress scolds reporter for surprise question

TOKYO (AP) — Given a cooperative corps of reporters and plenty of time to prepare answers beforehand, news conferences with Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko are usually serene affairs. But on Monday, as the royal couple met the press to discuss their upcoming trip to Europe, a last-minute change in questions left the empress clearly annoyed.

"I would appreciate your allowing us to put our thoughts together (in advance) so that we do not fail to express our feelings fully," Empress Michiko, who graduated from a Catholic Girls School, replied testily when asked how she feels about her forthcoming meeting with Pope John Paul II.

Emperor Akihito had just answered the same question. Gebhart Hiescher of the German newspaper Sueddeutsche Zeitung decided to ask the question because the one he was supposed to ask about German reunification seemed to overlap the preceding question. Ten reporters from the foreign media were invited to Monday's news conference. Press encounters with Japan's imperial couple, generally held only once or twice a year, are very carefully orchestrated to avoid any hint of confrontation or disharmony. The Palace Reporter's Club, which represents Japan's top newspapers and television networks, screens out "inappropriate" questions before submitting a final list a week or so in advance. The foreign media's questions also were selected by the Japanese Club.

Major takes it easy in Portugal

LISBON (AFP) — British Prime Minister John Major, currently taking a few days vacation in northern Portugal, spent Monday ambling through the capital's quaint little streets. Earlier, the prime minister, who arrived Saturday, went on a sailing trip along the River Tagus.

Mother Teresa feels better

NEW DELHI (R) — Mother Teresa of Calcutta, recovering from malaria at a New Delhi hospital, was progressing well Tuesday, a hospital bulletin said. "Mother Teresa had a comfortable night. She had no fever. She is taking her normal feeds. Her progress is satisfactory," a spokesman at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) said. The Nobel Peace Prize winner, who turns 83 Friday, is being treated by a team of senior consultants at AIIMS, New Delhi's premier hospital, after she was admitted there with high fever last week.

Bulgarian king's heart reburied

SOFIA (R) — The reburial of a human heart presumed to be that of Bulgaria's King Boris has left a trail of unanswered questions worthy of the most complex Balkan thriller. How did Boris die? Was he murdered and, if so, by whom? And what happened to the rest of his body? The heart, found in a garden of one of the royal palaces two years ago, was reinterred in a brief, surprise ceremony, five days before the scheduled commemoration of the king's death attended by his 85-year-old widow Iovanna. Iovanna, who lives in Portugal, asked for the burial to be held at the southern Rila Monastery before the return to Bulgaria Wednesday and refused offers of state protection and assistance. The family is keen that the reburial should not provoke political tensions by becoming a rallying point for a small but noisy band of supporters who would like to restore the monarchy in Bulgaria after 47 years.

Former Greek king ends visit

ATHENS (AFP) — Former King Constantine of Greece left his former homeland after a two week private holiday, marred by public controversy. The former king and his family, who live in Britain, flew from the Aegean island of Santorini for the Spanish island of Majorca where they were to continue their holiday. His visit, his second in 26 years, led to strong criticism by the opposition and an angry outburst by President Constantine Karanfilis. Speaking to the private Antenna television network, the former king said he intended to return "soon" to Greece, without specifying at what date. He said he had "trouble understanding the turmoil and the lack of self-composure" which had accompanied his visit.